THE
NEW YORK LEDGER
DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE ROMANCE THE NEWS AND COMMERCE

VOL. XXVIII. ROBERT BONNER, COR. OF WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STS. SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1872. TERMS. $3 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE. NO. 2.

"THE IMAGE OF LOVE IN CLAY."

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

The Image of Love in clay
Stood once on a pedestal there;
I flung them away to-day,
The shards of that statue fair.

For the Image of Love in clay
Is naught when it once has been shattered;
Why should the hand delay
To be rid of a thing so battered?

"Go," said I, "there are treasures
Of silver and gold,
Solid, substantial pleasures,
To have and to hold.

Fairer and frailer than any,
You have had your last day;
The years can never be many,
For the Image of Love in clay."

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MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LEON LEWIS,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER III.

JOURNEYING ON THE PLAINS.

Gay Heber had scarcely made the alarming discovery of the approach of the savages, when the Conductor's bugle rang out a second and yet more startling blast, that echoed far and wide over the sea-like prairie. The echo had not yet died out when Mark Heber's shrill boyish voice was heard, calling to Gay to return to the camp.

Even before the sound of Mark's voice reached her ears, Gay was in full flight back to cover, her small, slender figure now skimming over some earth billow, now half lost to view in some low swale. She fled with the swiftness of the startled antelope, every nerve in her delicate frame stretched to its utmost tension, her big brown eyes fixed upon the wagons, into which the women and children were already hurrying, concealing themselves behind boxes and barrels.

Gay gained the camp and the Heber wagon in safety. Mark hurried her into the wagon, and saw her ensconced among boxes and barrels, the little dusky cropped head below the top of her small rude fort, and then he hurried back to assist the men in the defence of the camp. The wagons were already drawn together in the form of a circle, and the animals were all driven into the inclosure thus formed.

The men had all armed themselves hastily, each with rifles and revolvers, which were already loaded and in readiness for use.

Conductor Landford was the commander-in-chief of the emigrants, and was as cool and self-possessed at this moment as if he had been in a lady's parlor—and indeed far more so. He was skilled in Indian warfare, and was a scout of considerable note.

He stood upon a wagon box, his field glass in his hand, with one eye upon the advancing Indians, and the other upon his own small troop.

"There are twenty savages," he announced, his shrill voice cutting the air like a bullet, "and there are fifteen of us, counting in Whitman's boy, Amory's two sons, Hopkins' son, and the two sons each of Brown and Arnold. And young Mark Heber. None of these boys are under seventeen, and we shall expect men's work of them. Remember, boys, you are fighting for your mothers and sisters. Show us what stuff you're made of."

The lads, whose ages ranged from seventeen to twenty-one, responded by a tighter grip on their rifles, and an expression of grim determination on every face.

Conductor Landford assigned to the young guard their position. Then he shouted:

"Now, men, the gun! Have out the gun!"

The men rushed to one of the wagons and dragged out a small swivel field-piece, which was mounted upon an easily portable carriage. This was placed in position, and Whitman loaded it, and manned it himself.

All these preparations had taken but a few minutes, and the camp had now put on a war-like air. The women and children were huddled in the wagons; the cattle were gathered within the inclosure, and seemed, by their uneasy air, to be aware that danger was near.

By this time the savages were within a mile of the camp, and still coming onward like a tornado.

"They will attack us in front," said the guide. "They are in war paint, and mean mischief. The river is at our rear, and is worth a dozen extra men to us, as it prevents the approach of the red-skins from that direction. When I give the word, fire!"

He leaped down from the wagon, laying aside his glass, and picked up his rifle.

"Do not fire the gun, Whitman, till I give the order," he said, his keen eyes not swerving from the enemy. "I shall give them a gentle hint first from the rifles. The boys shall have the first shot."

Every rifle was brought into position.

The Indians came nearer and nearer, advancing in a straight line, as a hawk might swoop down upon his helpless prey; but when they were within a quarter of a mile of the camp, Landford's shrill, clear voice rang over the prairies commanding them to stop.

If they did not comprehend his words, they assuredly did the gesture accompanying them, but with loud whoops of derision and defiance, they kept on in their advance.

"Now, boys, give them a hint that we are not fooling," said the guide grimly.

Mark Heber and his young comrades fired a volley.

Their shots did no especial damage to the savages, for in a first Indian fight young hands are apt to be unsteady, and young hearts throb wildly, but it brought the Indians to an abrupt halt, and they seemed to parley among themselves.

The next moment a shower of bullets came hurtling toward the defenders of the camp.

The emigrants, young and old, stood their ground. There was no coward blood in all the little band. Mark Heber's pulses grew stiller, his heart-throbs more natural, and his boyish face stern and rigid in its expression of grim determination. Cool, wary and resolute, he seemed in that moment to develop new character and energy.

Landford swept a glance around him. No one was hurt.

The Indians, after a little deliberation among themselves, spread out in the shape of a half circle, and resumed their approach, with the evident intention of attacking the camp on three sides.

"The gun!" cried Landford. "Give it to 'em, Whitman."

Whitman did "give it to them." One touch of his steady finger, and the little field-piece belched forth a very rain of death, mowing down three mounted savages, horses and riders rolling over and over in horrible death agony.

The remaining savages again came to a halt, but only for an instant. With a terrific war-whoop, they came on again to the onslaught, firing as they came, and looking like incarnate demons.

"All together!" cried the guide.

Whitman was loading his field-piece again, the sweat running from his hot and begrimed face. The other men and all the boys fired, each with especial aim. Six mounted savages fell before the deadly rain.

A panic immediately seized upon the survivors. In the midst of it, Whitman grimly touched off his field-piece anew.

This ended the conflict. The savages with horrible yells beat an instantaneous retreat, leaving their dead upon the field, and dragging away their wounded. One horse was seen flying from the scene with a dead and painted savage hanging by a stirrup.

At the distance of half a mile from the camp, the Indians paused for a moment to send back an ineffectual shower of bullets, and then continued their flight.

"So much for so much," said Landford, wiping his forehead and leaning forward upon his rifle. "Any one hurt?"

Amory had a bullet wound in his shoulder, and Arnold's eldest son had a flesh wound in his arm, but neither of these injuries were serious.

The cattle and live stock were found to be uninjured, the wagons having completely protected them from the arrows and bullets of the enemy.

But the occupants of the wagons? How had they fared?

Mark was on the point of hurrying to his own wagon, when a small cropped head was anxiously protruded from its front, and a pair of very bright brown eyes looked after the retreating Indians, and then settled upon Mark with an expression of unutterable joy.

"Are you safe, Gay?" demanded Mark, coming toward her.

"Yes, but I'm almost smothered," answered Gay. "You are all right, are you not, Mark? I peeped out at you once during the fight, and I saw you firing away like forty Fourth o' Julys! Wasn't I proud of you? And I saw an arrow dart past you, within an inch of your neck. Ah, that was terrible! Have the savages surely gone, Mark?"

Gay cautiously crept forth while she was speaking. Mark showed her that though the Indians still seemed near in that clear atmosphere, that they were already miles away, and still in full retreat.

Thus assured, Gay leaped to the ground, and hastened to offer her sympathies and aid to Mr. Amory and young Arnold. The remaining wagons disgorged their crouching occupants, women and children coming forth pale and trembling, but full of joyful gratitude at their escape from death, or a fate worse than death. Mrs. Amory attended upon her husband, and Mrs. Arnold caressed and petted her son with a mother's fond pride and sympathy.

The camp took on its usual appearance even before the retreating savages were entirely lost to view in the far distance.

The oxen and other animals were allowed to graze along the river bank. The boys gathered sticks and branches of trees that fringed the river, and built two or three great fires, and filled the kettles with water from the river. All the business of camp life was fully resumed. The women, including little Gay, proceeded to prepare the supper, while Mark and others milked the cows, reloaded the rifles, and did other things equally necessary.

The emigrants gathered in groups on the prairie near the wagons, each family by itself, yet all near together, to eat their evening meal.

Little Gay, with a proud, housewifely air, set before Mark a tin dish containing fried ham and boiled potatoes, a pot of coffee, and some hard crackers, a meal which Mark attacked with a keen appetite.

And while they ate and talked of the recent conflict, the long western twilight filtered its soft shadows down upon the great plains—not thickly like eastern twilights, but soft and hazy like a thin vail drawn over the face of Nature. The stars, of tremulous gold, shining more clearly than they ever do at the East, showed themselves suns by their radiance and brilliancy, and a slender crescent moon glowed like a golden crescent in the sky. The Little Blue stole between its tree-fringed banks onward to its destination, with gentle murmur, and now and then some shrill sound came from afar off, from some prowling prairie denizen, hovering in the distance with red eyes fixed upon the emigrants' fires.

After the supper, which was prolonged far beyond the usual hour, while the emigrants talked of the peril past, the dishes were washed, the fires extinguished, the cattle driven into the park inclosure, and the children housed for the night in the wagons.

Gay, with the importance due a mistress of a family, sat up with the matrons and elder girls.

Conductor Landford held a consultation with the men and elder boys.

"We may be attacked again to-night," said the guide. "That will depend upon whether the savages have friends to aid them within a few hours' distance. We must be prepared to receive them. We will have a regular guard to-night, instead of the usual single sentinel. Whitman, Hopkins and Mark Heber, if they have no objections to offer, can serve as guard."

The three named accepted the trust.

"We must have old Swivel ready for use at any moment," continued the guide. "Indians are treacherous rascals, and if they can muster up sufficient force, these painted demons who have already attacked us will come again."

"What's to be done about them Injun bodies?" inquired Whitman, pointing to the stark, painted figures strewing the prairie soil at a little distance.

"They had better be buried," said Landford. "We shall have a pack of coyotes on us before morning if we leave them unburied. Get your spades, men, and let us go to work."

The men hastened to bring their spades, Mark among the others, and set to work at a little distance from the camp, digging a trench of sufficient width and depth to contain all the bodies of the slain.

It was a weird scene, the steady and silent opening of the soil, with the rigid Indian bodies lying around, and the moonlight and starlight glorifying the limitless plains. Gay and the women watched it with fascinated eyes.

Before burying the bodies of the savages, many of the pioneers stripped from them whatever of value they wore—ear-rings, dyed plumes, worked moccasins, and bows, arrows, and pistols, to be kept for use or to display as curiosities. The pistols were examined closely, and Mr. Arnold declared them of the newest and best manufacture, and wondered how they came into the hands of the red men.

"They are sold to the savages by the white traders," said Landford, "along with whisky, beads and blankets. If no trader was allowed to sell these weapons or whisky to the Indians, we shouldn't have so much trouble with the reds. I tell you, instead of sending missionaries to the Indians, the people East should send them to the traders and frontiersmen. We wouldn't hear so much then about Indian atrocities, if the traders and whites were reformed."

"Do you think the Injuns are noble and all that, Landford?" inquired Whitman, leaning on his spade, and contemplating a dusky face and plumed head but a few feet from him. "'The wronged and noble savage,' you know."

"Well, I don't think so," answered Landford energetically. "They may have been wronged in the first place, cheated out of their lands, and taught to drink whisky; but whatever they were once, they are pretty low down now in the scale of being. I have heard of and seen generous Indians, such as we read of. I know they never forget an injury, and some of 'em remember benefits and repay 'em, but my opinion is that, as a general thing, they are a sneaking, treacherous, blood-thirsty lot of varmints, who will have to be clean wiped out before we're done with 'em."

The trench being now of sufficient depth, the bodies were dragged to it and laid decently within it, one body being piled beside or upon another, as it happened.

The task was soon over, and the men returned to the precincts of the camp.

The women and girls retired to the wagons, the men not on guard followed their example, and Whitman, Hopkins and Mark Heber were left to their duty as sentinels.

"You two can go to sleep," said Whitman, balancing his rifle on his shoulder, and walking to and fro on the springing turf with soldierly tread. "It's past eleven now, light as it is. I'll watch till one, and then wake you up to watch until morning."

Hopkins and Heber assented and went to their wagons, falling almost immediately asleep.

It seemed but a few minutes when Whitman called them in a low voice, saying that it was one o'clock. They came out in their greatcoats, for a Kansas night is always cool, and promenaded to and fro, rifles on their shoulders, while Whitman turned in and went to sleep.

There was no sign of Indians anywhere upon the plain; no shadows against the far horizon; no sounds of stealthy approach in the stillness of the night. The boy pioneer looked up at the star-gemmed sky and the slender crescent moon, and around him upon the great land sea, and his soul swelled within him, and nobler impulses, grander thoughts and motives, sprung to being in his breast.

"There is something in life besides the gaining of wealth," he thought. "I must make myself a MAN. Ah, how can one be small and mean and dishonest, how can one live a life of crime, out here? Why, we are in the very shadow of heaven, and this great plain seems to me an emblem of eternity."

He had time for many thoughts like these, as he paced to and fro, like a young soldier, Hopkins being equally silent; but before three o'clock the flush of sunrise began in the east, and soon after the camp was astir, and the bustle and business of the day was again begun.

After breakfast the line of march was again resumed. They made the average number of miles that day, sixteen, but encountered no Indians. They met a dozen ox-drawn wagons, however, the occupants of which they warned against the party of savages that had attacked them. They passed carcasses of oxen and mules, and bleaching bones of these animals and of buffalo. They saw antelopes at no great distance, and fired a few shots, killing one, which formed the basis of the meal at the noon-day halt, and also in the evening. The passed, too, a solitary grave by the roadside, marked with the tail-board of a wagon, on which was written the simple inscription: "Martha. Fallen by the way."

Gay speculated about the occupant of that lonely prairie grave for hours, her small face wearing a look of strange gravity. The length of the grave showed that a woman's form had been laid within it, and little Gay endowed the dead woman with all virtues, and furnished for her in her own mind a family of children, over whose desolation the young girl shed tears of tender sympathy.

That night they encamped upon the prairie, and met with no adventure, beyond the approach of a pack of coyotes within the distance of a half mile. A guard was maintained as on the previous night, but no Indians were to be seen.

Every day for the week that followed the encampment on the Little Blue was full of incident, but all of the pleasant sort, nothing occurring to alarm the emigrants.

And at the end of the week, to their great joy and relief, they arrived at Fort Kearney.

CHAPTER IV.

A DANGEROUS ACQUAINTANCE.

The emigrants did not halt at the fort, but pressed on to Kearney City, where they encamped just at nightfall. The usual bustle succeeded. Supper was eaten, and several of the men strolled into the "City," familiarly known to the people of that region as "Adobe Town."

Kearney City was, and is, an ambitious little town of the Platte river, and possessed, at the time of which we write, several stores, a post-office, and a hotel or two. The emigrants had purchases to make, and it was bed-time before all of them returned to camp.

The next morning Mark Heber took Gay into the town, and bought for her a pair of shoes, a straw hat with a gay ribbon, and some few articles which he had omitted to purchase at Leavenworth, and of which he had since felt the need.

In the afternoon the young people of the train went over to the fort, where they were well received, and where they remained several hours, returning to their camp before sunset.

Conductor Landford was returning to the camp from the town, as the joyous little party returned from the fort, and Mark Heber went to meet him. There was a frown on the brow of the guide that attracted Mark's attention.

"Shall we go on in the morning, sir?" asked the youth, as he came up to Landford and turned about to return with him.

"It seems so," returned the guide. "You know that there is stationed here an officer, with a squad of soldiers, whose duty it is to look after the westward-bound trains, and not permit a train of less than twenty wagons, properly manned, to start out. Any small train arriving here must wait for a larger train, unless there's one here, and be gobbled up by it. There's a train camped on the other side of the town, and I have visited it to-day. It has fifteen ox wagons and twenty men, with fifteen guns and twelve revolvers. Bound for Denver. It has been here two days, waiting for a train to make up the complement."

"And we are to be swallowed up in this train?" asked Mark.

"Yes. And what is more, I am to take charge of the big train. The conductor of the other train got into a fight last night with a lawless fellow, who has been in enmity with him ever since they started, and the conductor got dirked. He's lying over at the hotel, in a dangerous condition. The train inspector has given the charge of the two trains to me, therefore, and I fear I shall have my hands full. An attempt was made to arrest the assailant of the conductor, but other men on the train hustled him off out of the way, and he's now on horseback somewhere between this and Denver. If I did not believe the majority of the pilgrims in the other train were honest men, I'd wait here till another train comes, let the inspector say what he would."

"We shall have no difficulty," said Mark cheerfully. "The majority of the men in the other train must be honest, and there are fifteen of us all told, so we will greatly outnumber any dishonest ones."

"You don't quite know the sort of man a Western desperado is," said the guide. "He is often in league with the Indians; as often a member of an organized band of outlaws, who attack the overland mail and the emigrant trains, and who are little less to be feared than the Indians. He is a lawless fellow, who had as lief kill a man as eat his dinner. Life is nowhere held so cheap as at the West. But," he added more cheerfully, "we will hope that we shall have no outlaws or desperadoes on the train. If we have, we must be enough for 'em, that's all."

By this time the two entered the camp. Whitman and the others came forward to speak with the guide, and learned from him that the train was to be enlarged to the regular number and allowed to proceed in the morning under its present conductor.

The assault that had been made upon the conductor of the previously arrived train was made a matter of discussion, and regret that his assailant had escaped was universal.

"I know the fellow who dirked the conductor," said Landford. "He is a perfect demon. I know that he has killed several men; some in fair fight, and some he has foully assassinated. I saw him at Denver last year. He had just stabbed a miner from behind, and robbed him of all his money and gold. He was suspected, pursued and caught by a band of miners, who were about to lynch him, he abjectly begging for his life and confessing his guilt, when some of his fellow-desperadoes interfered, fought the miners and carried off the villain. He is called Blue Jack."

"Blue Jack!" cried one or two boys. "What a name!"

"They call him so because one side of his face is blue, as if bruised," said Landford. "Looks as if the blood had settled under the skin. I think it's the mark of Cain upon him. But we need not lose time in talking of him. We are safe not to meet him, thank the Lord for that!"

The groups lingered about their camp fire until ten o'clock, and then crept under cover. The evening was, as usual, chilly, and a heavy wind was blowing fresh from the mountains, having full sweep upon the plain.

The camp was astir at daybreak. Soon after breakfast, the other train which was to join that of Landford, came up, its long white wagons, known on the plains as "prairie schooners," sailing smoothly over the sea-like level. They came to a halt at Landford's camp, and the pilgrims, as emigrants are called in that region, came swarming out of their wagons, looking curiously at their future fellow-travellers, who returned the gaze with interest.

The new train was bound for Denver, as Landford had said, but all of the pilgrims in it did not intend to stop there. Two or three families with Mormon proclivities were bound from Illinois to Salt Lake. Two families intended to join a larger train at Denver, and to continue their journey to California. Two families were intending to go from Denver to Texas. These all seemed honest and respectable people, with whom association would be agreeable. These seven families included ten men, besides their women and children.

Of the remainder of the pilgrims no such favorable verdict could be given.

Four families intended to remain at or near Denver, the men to engage in mining. These were men who had been before engaged in the business, were rough and sinister of aspect, and were classed by Landford in his own mind as "doubtful characters." In a possible conflict between two parties, it would be difficult to predict which side they would take.

The remainder of the pilgrims were unmistakably of the outlaw stamp, with revolvers and bowie-knives in their belts. Two wagons belonged to these men, who had no woman with them. There were five of these desperadoes, and only the smallness of their number as compared with the others induced Landford to allow them to travel under his guidance and the protection of his train.

A few introductions took place, some conversation was had, and then the long train took up its line of march westward. Whitman's wagon came first, then Arnold's, Amory's, Knox's, Brown's, Hopkins', Halsey's and Mark Heber's, in the order named. Close behind the Heber wagon, and the cow tied be-

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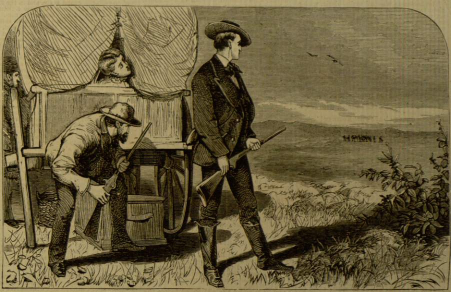

THE INDIANS DEFEATED IN THEIR ATTACK UPON THE CAMP.

hind it with a rope, came the first wagon of the other train, and stringing behind this the other "prairie-schooners."

The level of the plains was broken by the sterile hills that bound the Platte river on the south, running parallel with it at a distance varying from a half mile to three miles, and growing steeper as the travellers advanced, and breaking up into cones and peaks, separated by deep and gloomy cañons. The river was studded with islands, some shaded by trees, and Gay cast longing eyes upon these cool and isolated retreats, and wished that Mark would choose to settle upon one of them.

On leaving Kearney City, they entered upon the Indian country. They were liable at any time to an attack by savages, and the utmost care and vigilance were required and exerted. Conductor Landford was a man of few words usually, and very quiet, but his eyes were upon all parts of the train, and every man in it, even while he kept up a ceaseless watch against the approach of Indians.

Before night he had talked with every man in the new portion of the train, and had formed an opinion of them, which, however, only confirmed that which has been stated. He felt confident that he could rely upon ten men of the additional emigrants, and that, in case of trouble, the five "doubtful" ones would side with the desperadoes.

"Twenty-five to ten," he said to himself cheerfully. "That's all right. There won't be any conflict with such a discrepancy. The villains like the odd numbers on their side. We shall have no trouble, yet I may as well be on my guard."

On encamping that night, Landford appointed three men to remain on guard, and these men he was careful to pick out from those he knew to be reliable.

During the next day, the desperadoes, two of whom rode horseback, were much apart by themselves, and frequently scanned the horizon with their field glasses. They indulged in drink pretty freely too, and no one cared to molest them.

At the noon halt an incident occurred which aroused the first unpleasant feeling between the emigrants and the desperadoes.

Gay Heber had cooked her own and Mark's simple dinner as usual, and they had eaten it. Her tin dishes had been scoured and put back in her wagon, her shining kettle deposited within a water-bucket and hung from a hook under the wagon, and Gay had thrown herself idly, child-fashion, on the turf, and was plucking flowers and grass, while her sweet brown eyes gazed upon the distant hills which bounded her vision.

Her hat lay on the ground, with a wreath of freshly plucked flowers around it; her cheeks were faintly flushed, and she was a perfect picture of a happy, light-hearted child, half girl, half woman.

A merry snatch of song was on her lips when one of the desperadoes known as Burk came up to her, and paused beside her, regarding her with an insolent stare.

"Hallo, younker," he said gruffly, "I noticed you yesterday, and I swear you are the prettiest young one I ever did see. Got no father ner mother, eh? Going west with your brother, eh? Give us a kiss, there's a doll!"

He took a long cigar from his mouth and bent his black lips down to kiss her. His breath, tainted and polluted with whisky and tobacco, blew like a simoom in the girl's face.

In an instant she leaped to her feet.

Child as she was, she resented the insult that had been offered her with a woman's offended pride and anger.

"How dare you?" she cried. "Go away. If you touch me, I'll call my brother."

Mark was in the act of yoking his oxen, and was at a little distance. No grown person was very near, but the children were close at hand. One cry from Gay would bring every man in the camp to her, and the ruffian knew it. He glanced apprehensively toward the emigrants, and receded a step, but he had recently been imbibing a quantity of spurious courage in the shape of whisky, and returned to the charge with a smirk on his lips and a dark look in his eyes that contrasted strangely together.

"Ah, now, young one, you're fooling," he said insolently. "You act older than I took you for. I'll warrant no boy except your brother has kissed them lips o' your'n, and I'm bound to have one—so now!"

Gay recoiled a little. She was brave to her finger ends, and scorned to run from the fellow. She would not even call her brother. In truth, she felt equal to the emergency.

As quick as a flash, she drew from her pocket the pistol Mark had bought for her at Leavenworth, and which he had since taught her to use skilfully. In fact, she had taken daily lessons in target practice since the attack upon the train by Indians on the Little Blue, and she was not afraid of Burk with the little weapon in her hand.

She cocked the pistol, and its four small dark tubes were promptly presented to the eyes of Burk for inspection. He started back in unaffected horror and amazement.

Recovering himself, he would have forced a laugh, but there was a resolute glow in the girl's pure brown eyes that startled him anew.

"The little vixen!" he muttered. "She acts like a highwayman instead of a shrinking girl. She beats all!"

The tubes continuing to frown darkly at him, he began a retreat.

"I was only fooling," he observed. "I didn't mean nothing. Don't say nothing, young one. I'm off."

And he hastened to beat a retreat to his own proper quarters.

Gay's light laugh rang after him mockingly.

"Curse her!" muttered Burk. "Blue Jack would tame that wild-cat spirit of her'n, and I wish he may do it, that's all. I'll make 'em acquainted, blest if I don't!"

Gay's fear of the ruffian had not been near so great as her anger at him. When he had gone, she uncocked her pistol and put it in her pocket, and, picking up her hat, slowly returned to her wagon.

The train was ready to resume its march. The children were put into the wagons, and Gay climbed up to the driver's seat in her own vehicle. Mark prepared to walk, driving the ox team with a goad.

Gay peeped out at the side of her wagon. Burk was riding on a stout horse, near the rear of the line.

"Come up into the wagon, Mark," said the girl coaxingly. "I have something to tell you."

Mark climbed up beside Gay, his boyish face full of tenderness and affection as he looked down upon his adopted sister.

"Well, what is it, little Gay?" he said, as she hesitated.

"Have you noticed that man Burk, who joined us with the other train at Kearney City?" asked Gay, very gravely. "If you haven't, just peep out at the side of the wagon. He's riding a horse, and wears a short blue jacket nearly covered with brass buttons."

"I've seen him and noticed him," said Mark. "Mr. Landford has a poor opinion of him. He's a confederate of Blue Jack, the outlaw. What have you to say about him, Gay?"

"He wanted to kiss me back at the halt," said Gay composedly, "and, as you were busy, I just pulled out my pistol and scared him. He thought I meant to shoot him, and went off to the rear of the train."

Mark's boyish brows grew stern, and his eyes flashed.

"The coward and villain!" he exclaimed. "I'll horsewhip him for that. How dared he?"

"Don't get into trouble on my account, dear Mark!" exclaimed Gay, in alarm. "He's a bad man, and he might kill you. He didn't kiss me, and I have taught him to keep his distance, so that he won't trouble me again. Don't speak to him, Mark, please don't!"

But Mark would not promise. The sternness on his brows deepened as he continued to regard the innocent childish face, radiant with purity and spirit.

"How dared the ruffian think of kissing you?" he ejaculated. "If he so much as looks at you again, I'll teach him manners with this ox-whip. The dastardly wretch! I'll keep my eye on him, Gay. I'll wait until I catch him approaching you again, and then I'll tan his jacket for him!"

Gay laughed in sudden relief.

"Then his jacket will go untanned," she said, "for he won't dare come near me again. He would as soon touch a nettle as to touch me."

The afternoon passed without particular incident, beyond the meeting of a pony express bound east.

About sunset, when Landford was meditating a halt for the night, the keen eye of the guide beheld in the distance a solitary horseman, going slowly in the same direction as the train, but some miles in advance. Using his field glass, Landford saw that the horseman was not an Indian, as he first suspected, but a white traveller, attired in the usual garb of the frontiersman.

The traveller, looking back, saw the advancing train, the white canvas wagon roofs glittering in the sun, and he paused a few moments, and then putting spurs to his horse, turned and came swiftly toward the train.

Before he had reached it, Landford had commanded a halt. When he came up, a group of emigrants were waiting in front of the train to receive him.

He reined in his horse abruptly, and raised his hat politely to Landford, whose prominent position in advance of the group and whose air of command proclaimed him the conductor of the train.

The horseman was tall and athletic, with a giant figure and a round bullet-shaped head set upon a big red throat. He had the chest and arms of a Hercules. His eyes were small and black, with a fierce glitter in them, and his face was covered from the eyes downward with a long black beard, which concealed his mouth and fell in a tangled mass upon his breast.

"Are you the conductor of this train, sir?" inquired the horseman, addressing Landford. "I am a bearer of dispatches from Fort Kearney to Fort Sedgwick, and set out alone, very imprudently too, as there are red-skins ahead, I hear. Will you grant me the protection of your train during the remainder of my journey?"

Landford regarded the stranger with suspicion, and said:

"When did you leave Fort Kearney?"

"Two days ago," was the prompt response. "I lamed my horse on the first day out, and have made poor progress since—in fact, such poor progress that I have not been able to overtake the train with which I purposed travelling."

Landford looked at the horse keenly. He certainly was lame.

"Where are your dispatches?" asked the guide.

The horseman drew from his breast pocket a small sealed packet in an official envelope. Landford examined it, and could find nothing about it to prove it other than genuine. He handed it back, with the question:

"What is your name?"

"Fallon—Lieutenant Fallon," was the reply.

Landford knew that there was or had been a Lieut. Fallon at Fort Kearney, and had once heard a description of him. That description accorded very well with the appearance of this stranger, and his first doubts of him grew rapidly less.

"We have to be particular, Lieutenant," he said apologetically. "There are all kinds of people out on the plains."

"Just so—just so," said the Lieutenant, showing a sudden gleam of white teeth in ambush behind his forest of beard. "I have other credentials, if you care to look at them. I have—yes, I have it with me—my commission as Lieutenant."

He drew out a long leathern pocket-book, and submitted the document in question to Landford, who read it carefully, and knew it to be genuine. He also exhibited several letters addressed to "Lieut Fallon, Fort Kearney, Nebraska," and also a letter from the commander of Fort Kearney to the commander of Fort Sedgwick, commending the bearer as "Lieut. Fallon, one of our best officers, but a little too rash and careless of danger."

Landford's suspicions vanished like smoke. He bade Lieutenant Fallon welcome, and offered him the freedom of the camp.

"I'll journey with you if you'll just make me one of yourselves," said the Lieutenant. "I'll share your watches, your fatigues, and, if need be, your fights."

He leaped from his horse and turned him loose to graze. He talked apart with Landford, and made himself agreeable to the Whitmans, so that the hospitable Whitman invited him to take all his meals with his family, which offer Lieutenant Fallon accepted.

He ate supper with the Whitmans, and sat up till late, talking with various emigrants. At last he went to the rear of the train, and wrapping himself in a sort of Mexican poncho, flung himself upon the ground, declaring that he liked the soldier's couch above all others.

The light gloom of the night deepened. The guards, three in number, walked to and fro, their guns on their shoulders. Somewhere about midnight Lieutenant Fallon turned restlessly, and his glittering black eyes looked keenly around him. The guard was at the further end of his beat, the two other guards being stationed at equal distances around the train.

Fallon rolled over and over, little by little, seeming to be asleep, until he neared the recumbent figure of Burk, who lay on the ground wrapped in a blanket.

Fallon waited until the guard had come near them and had gone again to the further end of the beat. Then his voice cut the stillness in a fierce, sibilant whisper.

"Burk!" he hissed.

Burk started, with a smothered oath.

"Who calls?" he growled.

"Hush, you idiot!" hissed Fallon, between his teeth. "Have I fooled you and the boys as easily as I fooled the conductor of the train? Don't you know me? I haven't got my card-case with me, but I'm Blue Jack, at your service! Ha, ha! The serpent has got into Eden!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A PRECISE ANSWER.

Bill Spooner, a dry, humorous fellow—the same who built the Philbrick House, and other edifices of like character,—afforded the court a refreshing smile the other day. He had been summoned as a witness in a case of assault and battery, and Mr. S——, a lawyer given greatly to badgering and brow-beating, in the course of a senseless cross-questioning, said to him,—

"Mr. Spooner, you say you saw the defendant strike the plaintiff with his fist?"

"I did, sir."

"Distinctly?"

"Yes, sir."

"How far were you standing from the parties at the time?"

"I was standing six feet, four inches and a half from the defendant, and seven feet, three inches and a quarter from the plaintiff."

"And pray, sir, if I may ask,—how can you be so precise?"

"Why, sir," replied Spooner, with the utmost coolness and candor, "I said to myself at the time,—'*Some peeping, poke-your-nose rascal may take a fancy to ask me about this, so I'll just take out my rule and measure it.*' And I did."

Mr. S—— collapsed, and Bill Spooner stepped down.

S. C., JR.

THE REASONS WHY.—Accident renders many marriages unhappy; carelessness others; natural bad disposition others. Some rush into matrimony in the hope of revenging themselves on another who has slighted their love; some for the mere excitement and desire of change, without any love at all. Some fall blindly off the precipice; some leap desperately. Many are drawn off by the delusive lapse of irresistible passion.

GOTTLIEB'S WISH.

BY HATTIE KYLE.

In the neatest of neat little kitchens sat Gottlieb Werner, with Gretchen, his betrothed, and Gretchen's mother, old Frau Van der Weyd. What a picture of comfort it was! The clean, sanded floor; the polished stove, with its glowing grate; the bright little lamp on the red cherry table; the dresser, filled with shining dishes and tins; and these three laughing and jesting together.

It was the thirty-first of December, and a bitter night. Without the wind roared like a hundred raging lions, and the snow froze as it fell; but Frau Van der Weyd sat close by the glowing stove, and Gottlieb's arm had stolen around Gretchen's chubby waist, so the inmates of the little kitchen were not cold.

There was a lull in the laughter. One could hear the prim little clock "peck, peck," like an industrious woodpecker, and the click of the knitting-needles in the silence, for the old Frau and her daughter were thrifty women, and never wasted a moment of precious time.

Presently Gretchen laid down the crimson wool, and brought from the inner recesses of a cupboard a pitcher of Rhine wine and a plate of New-year's cookies, and set them on the table. Then the three looked at the timepiece; it wanted yet five minutes of midnight. Gottlieb yawned a tremendous yawn, and Gretchen smiled down on him a moonlight smile.

If the law of contrast hold good, these two would be well mated. Gottlieb, a long-limbed, dark-skinned German of Frankfort, quick and restless in all his movements, with bright dancing eyes, fierce black mustaches and heavy lower jaw; Gretchen slow and phlegmatic, a little dumpling of a woman, with a placid face, mild blue eyes, and soft flaxen hair curled round her head in wonderful infinitesimal curls impossible to any but a Dutch woman—a veritable Holland maiden in appearance, although she had never touched her mother's native soil, and spoke unbroken English as her native tongue.

"I have a strange feeling to-night," said Gottlieb, eyeing the clock impatiently.

"And I," said Gretchen; "I feel as if something were about to happen."

"Something good, Gretchen?" asked Gottlieb anxiously.

"Something bad," said Gretchen, with the faintest suspicion of a frown on her smooth forehead.

And old Frau Von der Weyd nodded her head over her knitting with an air of infinite wisdom.

The clock chimed the first stroke of midnight. Gretchen poured the sparkling liquor, and the three clasped hands and drank to the new year.

The glasses were filled again.

"One hundred thousand dollars!" cried Gottlieb, in great excitement; "and three years to spend it in!"

The others stayed their glasses, already lifted to join in his toast, and gazed at him in blank amazement.

"What would you do after that?" cried Frau Van der Weyd.

"Do? Why, the devil might have me after that!"

Gretchen squealed, the old woman wrung her hands in holy horror, and Gottlieb laughed aloud.

"Well, well," said he, "I'd go back to my work and save a dollar a week again for the rest of my life. But for three years I needn't count my lager. No bank should ever see my money. Wouldn't we look nice in our carriage, Gretchen?"

And he wheeled the girl round before the mirror which hung in the corner, garnished with Christmas evergreens.

Just then a tremendous double knock was heard at the door.

Gretchen answered it, and after a moment ushered in a stranger, a little, dark man, whose garments dripped with icicles, and whose features were so stiff with cold that he could scarcely enunciate a word; yet despite his frozen condition, he bowed in an almost reverential manner to Gottlieb, and waited for an invitation to be seated.

"This gentleman," said he, when he had thrown aside his drenched cloak, and wiped his dripping face, "is Mr. Gottlieb Werner, son of the late Gottlieb Werner of Frankfort."

"Yes," said Gottlieb, moving restlessly in his chair.

It was hard to tell which opened wider, Gretchen's blue eyes or her cherry lips; and Frau Van der Weyd thrust forward her gray head, the better to hear what passed.

"I have been searching for you, sir, since seven o'clock. The night was so stormy I lost myself somewhere in the by-streets, and reached your lodgings, sir, only to find that you were out, and to be directed. I hope that you and these ladies will excuse the lateness of the hour."

Gottlieb grunted something intended for a polite rejoinder, and the stranger, having delivered himself of his speech, fell to chattering with his teeth, and chafing his hands in a terrified manner, every now and then making a furtive dab at his cheeks and nose, as though to convince himself of their existence.

"Terrible!" he muttered to himself, "terrible!"

Then Gretchen poured him a glass of wine, which offering was gratefully received.

Meanwhile Gottlieb stood glaring at the little man. His breath came faster. Such a fierce, wild look came over his face, one might almost have feared he would tear the stranger limb from limb, if he did not shortly unbosom himself.

"I was very anxious, sir," said this mysterious guest at length, "to have my business with you transacted to-morrow—to-day, I should say," he added, with a laugh.

And he took from an inner pocket of his coat, with a slowness which seemed to render his danger more and more imminent, a document sealed with a huge red seal, and placed it in Gottlieb's hand.

"I can't read English writing. Here, Gretchen." And the young man tossed the letter to his betrothed.

She shook like a leaf as she broke the seal, then stared aghast.

"It is not English. It is some Dutch. I know not what it is," she said.

Gottlieb snatched the paper back, and devoured it with greedy eyes. It was written in the language he had learned at school, the first line of pure German he had seen since, a little vagabond boy, he had found his way into the great, new world of America.

He tossed off his yet unfinished wine, brought the empty glass down with a crash, which shattered it to atoms, and started to his feet.

"Old Uncle Karl is dead," he shouted. "Good! He had a pile of silver florins hidden in his cellar. Better! He has left them all to me. Best! Two hundred and fifty-three thousand florins—forty-six thousand ducats of Prussian money." And he threw back his head and laughed a weird, unearthly laughter.

Gretchen fell a trembling, and stole close to her mother's chair. The lawyer looked grave; it was evident that he was meditating on results from a legal point of view, if this should prove a case of insanity produced by his sudden announcement.

"How much is this in English money, this forty-six thousand ducats?" asked Frau Van der Weyd, looking at the stranger.

"In United States currency, Madam, all probable expenses deducted, something upward of one hundred thousand dollars."

At this Gottlieb went off into a fresh burst of laughter, and presently the small man donned his cloak, and the two went out into the cold and darkness, arm in arm.

Next day Gottlieb made his appearance radiant with joy, and dressed in such garments as had never been seen in that little cottage before. Such a gorgeous neck-tie! such a watch and chain! such shiny new boots! His sweetheart was enraptured with this new Gottlieb, and when he came fairly into possession of his money, presents poured in upon Gretchen in the shape of gaudy silks and velvets, feathers, flowers and jewelry.

At first Gretchen's simple tastes revolted. It was difficult to go so far out of the old beaten track. But what girl will not yield to love and vanity combined? At last she went into the streets tricked out in all these gorgeous trappings, making efforts, very violent ones, considered from the stand-point of her phlegmatic nature, to steady herself upon her high-heeled shoes, and vainly essaying the fashionable gait.

Meanwhile the day appointed for the wedding of the pair had long since passed, postponed that the ceremony might come off in better style; and Gretchen, a little saddened by this thought, raised her blue eyes to see Gottlieb riding by with a lady, a grand lady, with a tower of crimps upon her head, cashmere shawled and splendidly attired—Gottlieb, who had vowed that one look of her sweet eyes was dearer to him than life, yet he had blasted them with such a sight.

The girl went home, took off the high-heeled shoes, the green silk, the red shawl, the blue bonnet with its pink flowers, and though Frau Van der Weyd almost cried over the sinful waste, would neither sell nor wear them for evermore.

When Gottlieb next visited the little cottage, his reception was very cool, but he recked little of that; indeed he scarcely noticed it. A fierce thirst of money had seized upon him; a fear that what he had would soon be exhausted. He gambled day and night, with a gambler's usual luck.

He bought a fine house, furnished it from roof to cellar in grand style, and in the flush of admiration of his new purchase a thought of his little sweetheart came across him.

"In a year will be time enough to settle," he said to himself; and the year passed, and another, and Gretchen was forgotten in the excitement of his life. Yet, in the background of his fancy, she remained a vision of waiting patience.

He gathered a band of wild fellows around him, rich young men as reckless as himself. They lolled in his blue satin chairs, and spat on his velvet carpets. It was a marvel where all the wine and beer went to, said the man who kept his cellars.

There were times when Gottlieb grew sullen and moody. It may have been that his money was fast decreasing. It may have been that some nobler chord in the man's nature thrilled with the memory of the old home loves, and quiet little Gretchen, always placid and sweet, rose up like a reproachful ghost before his "mind's eye." Who shall say?

However that may have been, his wild companions hailed these occasions with a secret satisfaction, for never was Gottlieb Werner more lavish, more wild with fun and frolic, than after these stupid lethargies.

One snowy December night they sat smoking their long pipes around a table covered with wines and costly viands, a crowd of red-faced, blear-eyed men, when Gottlieb started from his easy-chair, where he had sat for full an hour with his head sunk on his breast.

"Now for a sleigh ride!" he cried.

The men rose with a wild whoop.

Soon as human hands whose work was "money's worth" could accomplish their task, the sleighs were drawn up at the door.

Over the white snow he sped. The placid moon looked down upon their bloated faces; the incense of breaths foul with tobacco and stale wines arose to the pure sky. Blasphemies and curses and foul jests broke the calm silence.

Behind them, in the house, quiet save for the heavy breathing of drunken servants, one little spark winked and winked like a demon's eye on the white cloth where the broken feast was spread. It grew larger. It glared with a lurid light. It rose up from its shelter in an upturned meerschaum. It flamed a tongue of fire. It ran with little, crackling snaps over the damask. The long, trailing end, dragged by drunken feet till it tangled itself with the flowing window-curtains, and through the tangle the little fire demon played. A flash of fire on the night, fanned by fierce winds, and Gottlieb's house was gone, and with it all his treasure, for, true to his words in Frau Van der Weyd's kitchen, no bank had ever seen his money.

The brandy bottle went round. The sleighs flew over the pure, white snow. Rough wrestling and wild pranks went on, and suddenly, at a turn of the road—no one was sober enough to know how it happened—Gottlieb was thrown over a bank some twenty feet in height—thrown head downward. Then fierce agonies of cold and torturing pain, lingering weeks in a hospital, where news of his loss came to his unwilling ears, the blackness of anguish and remorse, and yearning for the old quiet days that could never come again.

Bells were sounding in his ears, loud cannon booming. He raised his unhappy head, and begged of some one to tell him what it meant. It was New-year's eve, they said. The bells were ringing in the new year.

Ah! he had had his wish.

He saw the fat nurse move slowly up the ward, and stole painfully from the couch where he lay, dressed in the garments he had worn the last night of his mad life, stained with wine and mud, and torn by the fall. With some secret project working in his mind, he had begged to wear them many days before, and they had given him his way.

He stole out into the outer passage, and found his way into the streets. Every step was an agony, yet he crawled on like a grotesque shadow, a little, deformed, distorted figure, all grace and symmetry and health and manliness and youth and beauty for ever gone.

Sounds of mirth came from a beer saloon hard by. He dragged himself slowly in, and thrust his head around the green screen, behind which sat four jolly Germans, playing some game of chance for drinks. How often had he sat with them in the self-same spot!

"Move on, ugly mug," cried one, as he caught sight of the upturned face, distorted by past debauches and present pain and grief. "You would none of us when you were rich. Now we want none of you."

And a glass of beer splashed over his head and mingled with his tears.

On, on, at a snail's pace. His journey's end was reached at last—Frau Van der Weyd's cottage. He lifted the latch of the outer door. How well he knew the way! A curtain half covered the glass of the room door. How often in the old days he had stooped to look beneath, that he might take them by surprise.

He trembled no less with terror and apprehension than with fatigue and pain.

Would Gretchen chase him from her presence with imprecations?—sweet little Gretchen! who had never spoken an unkind word in all her life. Was she alive? Even that he did not know.

He peered through the pane beneath the curtain, and this was the sight which met his eye: Gretchen—his little blue-eyed Gretchen—by the fire, with a white-robed infant on her breast and Hans beside her—Hans, who had loved her in the old days before she was betrothed. On the other side sat old Frau Van der Weyd, smiling and nodding at the pair. They were all too busy with each other to see the wild eyes peering through the glass upon them.

He raised his glance to the mirror which hung in its old corner, garnished once again with Christmas evergreens.

"The fiend's mark is on my face!" he cried, with a bitter groan, and crawled once more into the comfortless streets, where, when the morning came, they found the dead cripple stretched at Gretchen's door-way, with the last scowl of agony fixed on his frozen face.

The strangest part of all was, that when heirs were wanted for the small sum of savings which Gottlieb Werner had deposited in the bank in the days of his industrious youth, no heirs could be found. The lawyer who had given notice of the old German uncle's decease was advertised for in vain. Old Karl Werner was supposed by those who knew him to have died in poverty, and nothing has ever been discovered in relation to the mysterious legacy—the answer to Gottlieb's Wish.

WIT AND HUMOR.

DISRAELI rather nonplussed Darwin, the monkey man, recently, when discussing "the essential qualities of the human species," by remarking, "But, you see, Darwin, there are pillows now which do not possess any of what you call the essential qualities of the human species, and yet they invariably *come under the head* of rational beings."

THE students of the Natural History class in a New England college thought they would "sell" their professor, and so one day asked him "why a cat, when she is eating, turns her head first one way and then the other." "Because," quietly answered the professor, "she cannot turn her head both ways at once."

COMMERCIAL INSTINCT.—When Prince John Van Buren was practicing law in the country, in his early professional days, he was called upon to defend a man charged with stealing a cow. "Why was he such a fool as to steal the cow?" said John. "Why didn't he buy her on time, and then refuse to pay for her?"

THE children of a school in Connecticut all agreed not to wish their teacher a happy New-year, because, as one of the little boys said, "You know she's never happy unless she's flogging somebody, and if we wish her happiness she'll be sure to go for some of us."

"SUSIE," said a teacher to one of her pupils, "you shouldn't make faces. You'll grow up homely if you make faces." Susie looked thoughtfully in the teacher's face a moment, and then innocently asked, "Did *you* make faces when *you* was a little girl?"

A WOMAN applied to a magistrate the other day for a warrant against a neighbor, saying, "She called me a thief, your Honor. Can't I make her prove it?" "Perhaps you can," quietly replied the magistrate, "but if I were you, I wouldn't do it."

A SARCASTIC Georgia editor, in noticing a fair which recently came off in Macon, says, "One of our contemporaries took a very valuable premium, but a meddlesome and firm policeman made him put it right back where he took it from."

"YES, 'tis true," soliloquized a philosophical husband, "an honest man *is* the noblest work of God." "Then," exclaimed his high-tempered wife, "what is an honest woman?" "His rarest, my dear, His rarest work," muttered the philosopher.

"JOHN!" exclaimed Mary, throwing her arms around her brother's neck, "what substitute can there be for the endearments of a sister?" "Well," said John, "you see, Sis., that depends on whose sister it is."

"HOW many unfortunates have fallen in war!" said a spinster to a veteran general, who was also a veteran bachelor. "Not half so many, Madam, as have fallen in love!" was his testy reply.

AN elderly maiden lady, hearing for the first time that matches are made in heaven, declared that she didn't care a straw how soon she left this sinful world for a better land.

THE Philadelphia mint has coined some gold twenty-five cent pieces, but they are not worth much. They are so small that it takes three or four of them to make a dollar.

DOBSON says his friends seem determined to give him the title of Dr. His butcher, baker, and all the rest do so, but they put the Dr. *after* his name instead of before it.

AN old lady on Long Island says she wishes Congress would hurry up and pass the silver service bill, as she's been waiting for hers these forty years.

THE dandy element seems to pervade all nature. Even among flowers, which are emblems of modesty, we have the dande-lion.

THE youngster may be coaxed to bed early on Christmas eve, but he is apt to make his presents known early in the morning.

A POVERTY-STRICKEN writing-master says that Fortune's hand would be a good one if its down strokes were not so heavy.

IT is claimed that women would make good sheriffs, because they're so faithful as to "writs of attachment."

SOME people act as if their debts were like coffee, and would settle themselves in time by standing.

DOWN East people call prohibitory liquor laws toper graphical legislation.

A RUM blossom is one species of rye flower.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A CONDUCTOR on a San Francisco horse railroad car lately got off his platform to assist a particularly stout old lady into the car over some very deep mud. Forgetting her exceeding weight, she sank bodily into his arms, and as a consequence, the conductor sat down quietly in the mud, and the passenger fell over his head. The conductor was finally obliged to go on his way, leaving the old lady to wipe the mud off her clothes with a pocket handkerchief, and breathe vengeance against the Company.

A SINGULAR AND FRIGHTFUL CASUALTY.—Rev. Dr. Dennison, President of the Kansas State Agricultural College, died under extraordinary circumstances. A local newspaper contained a cartoon of a maniac in violent contortions, labeled "Joseph Dennison, D. D." The unfortunate man glanced at it, gave an agonizing cry, sank on the floor and died instantly.

AT a wedding in Springfield, Mass., the other evening, the clergyman began to marry a groom's-man and bride's-maid, and had nearly completed the ceremony before the astounded groom's-man rallied sufficiently to object. The mortified minister then proceeded to marry the right parties, and got through without objection.

A GENTLEMAN who took a Turkish bath the other day, just after eating a hearty meal, exclaimed, as he was walking to a street car, "Somebody struck me," and fell insensible to the sidewalk. He was taken home, and medical aid summoned, but he died of apoplexy in less than an hour.

THE floor of a barn, in which twelve oxen were stabled, in Princeton, Ill., gave way the other day. The oxen were all fastened with heavy chains, eleven of which broke and let the oxen down safely; the twelfth chain was a good one, and choked its ox to death.

AN explosion of cartridges occurred in a cartridge shop in Springfield one day last week, by which a good deal of damage was done, and one of the operatives, a girl fifteen years old, had her face and hands badly burned and her skull fractured.

THE Sultan of Turkey has raised quite a commotion by reviving an old rule of etiquette requiring all horsemen to dismount and lead their horses when passing his palace. The Turkish horsemen of the present day won't stand any such nonsense.

THE wife of a gentleman living in West Gardiner, Me., awoke him one morning lately by a gurgling noise in her throat. He raised her up and she died instantly, without uttering a word. She had been in apparently perfect health.

A FARMER living near Scarsdale, N. Y., went out to fell a tree the other morning, and as the tree came down a large limb struck him on the head and fractured his skull, causing his death within thirty minutes.

IN Xenia, Ohio, five powder mills belonging to the Miami Powder Company, exploded one day last week, killing four men instantly and wounding several others. All the killed were men of families.

A BOSTON paper says it is a noticeable fact that when women preach in that city some of the ladies of the congregation are pretty sure to go to sleep, while the men keep wide awake.

THE floating ice in the Hudson River nearly suspended navigation last week between New York and New Jersey. The ferry-boats were two and three hours in crossing the river.

A YOUNG girl in Indiana used sealing wax as a substitute for chewing gum, and the Venetian red it contained poisoned her, and after lingering a few days, she died in great agony.

A MAN was recently crushed to death in a Kenosha mine by an immense mass of rock falling upon him from the roof. His body could only be recovered by blasting the rock.

A HAPPY PEOPLE.—The town of Hancock, N. H., does not owe one cent. At the last town meeting it was voted to raise one dollar for contingent expenses.

AN Indian in Michigan, attempting to open a can of nitro-glycerine with his hatchet, was blown several rods and taken up in pieces, dead.

A YOUNG lady in Oil City, Penn., while wringing out a dress, ran a needle through the palm of her hand, and died in five minutes.

A YANKEE wood-chopper recently killed three bears in succession with an ax, as they came out of a hollow tree.

BORN IN A CAGE.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

Born in a cage! O hapless fate
To captives such as I!
The hand that shuts my wiry gate
Should close it with a sigh,
That I am doomed to sit and sing,
A bond slave, till I die.

My yellow wings are finely formed
As any wings you see;
And yet they beat their prison bars
In bitter mockery.
My plaintive song, in compliment,
Is called "Dick's Jubilee!"

I see afar the wooded vales,
I see the plashing rills;
I *know* when other songsters choose
Their mates among the hills;
While I, a solitary bird,
Must brood, and bear my ills.

My seed is in the corner there,
My water too is sure;
But how a little wriggling worm
My appetite would lure;
Caught by myself—a dinner earned—
'Twould half my ailments cure.

Born in a cage! a prisoner doomed,
Without a single crime,
To long in vain for life and love
In some fair sylvan clime!
Will birds be free in that bright age,
The sweet millennium time?

◆

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,
AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE GHOST SEEN BY "TATERS."

He shuddered, as no doubt the bravest cowers
When he can't tell what 'tis that doth appall.
How odd a single hobgoblin's nonentity
Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity.
BYRON.

"Emma, dear, I have a letter from Uncle John Lytton," said Laura gravely, going to the side of her friend.

"I hope they are all well at Lytton Lodge," responded Emma.

"Oh, yes, thank you, they are all quite well; but," added Laura, with a sigh, "Uncle John has written to me to come at once and pay them a visit. And to leave me no excuse, he has sent his servant Mithridates on horseback, with another led horse and side-saddle, to take me to Lytton Lodge."

"Oh, dear! But you need not go, I hope?" said Emma, looking up, with a sigh.

"I must go," answered Laura, with another sigh. "And really I ought to be glad to go to see such kind friends as all my relatives there have been to me; but you see, Emma, I don't like to leave you for a single day even, before I have to return to school."

"Then why do you go at all? Why can you not send an excuse?"

"Dear Emma, would *you* refuse to go if you were in my place?" inquired Laura.

Emma Cavendish could not reply.

"No, you would not," added Laura, "because it would not be right to refuse."

"But, my dear, to perform so long a journey on horseback! It must be over twenty miles. Let me see—it is about nine miles from here to Wendover, and it must be ten or eleven from Wendover to Lytton Lodge," said Emma.

"No, only about eight or nine. The whole distance is not more than seventeen or eighteen miles by the roundabout route. And if I could go as the crow flies, it is not more than six miles. Why, you know the eastern extremity of your land touches the western extremity of uncle's."

"So it does. And if, as you say, you could go as the crow flies, that is, straight over mountains and rivers, you could get there in two hours. As it is, it will take you five or six hours, and that is too long for a girl to be in the saddle, especially a city bred girl, unaccustomed to such exercise."

"I think I can stand it," smiled Laura.

"But you shall not try! If you *will* go, you must take the little carriage. When do you propose to start?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Well, we will send the redoubtable Mithridates back with his steeds. And send you on your journey in the little carriage, under the faithful guardianship of old Jerome, with orders to remain in your service for the term of your visit; but to bring you back again, at farthest, on the third day," said Emma, peremptorily.

Laura thanked her friend, but protested against any trouble being taken on her account.

But Miss Cavendish was firm, and the arrangement was made according to her plan.

In the mean time Mithridates, eating beef and bread, and drinking home-made sweet cider in the kitchen, recovered some of his composure; though still, with his mouth full of meat and his eyes starting from his head, he persisted that he had seen the spirit of his young mistress. And it was a token of his death.

"G'long way from her', boy. Ef I didn't know as you *wasn't*, I should think as you *was*, intoxified! There never was no sperrit never seen into this house," said Aunt Molly indignantly.

"I don't care! I did see her sperrit! So there now!" persisted "Taters," bolting a chunk of bread, and choking with it for a moment. "And—and—it's a token of my death."

"Is that the reason you're a trying to kill yourself now—you iddiwut."

"No; but I seen her sperrit!"

"I don't believe one word of it. You're a making of it all up, out'n your own stoopid head! There, now, ef you're done eatin', you'd better go 'long and put up your hosses," said Aunt Moll, seeing her guest pause in his gastronomic efforts.

But "Taters" hadn't done eating, and didn't get done until all the dishes on the kitchen table were cleared and the jug of cider emptied.

Then, indeed, he gave over and went out to look after his "beasts."

At the same hour Mary Grey, locked fast in her room, suffered agonies of terror and anxiety. She too had seen a "ghost,"—a ghost of her past life! a ghost that might have come to summon her from her present luxurious home.

On her way down stairs to the drawing-room, she had been arrested on the head of the middle landing by the sight of a once familiar face and form.

She met the distended eyes of this apparition, and saw at once that he *had* recognized her, as surely as she *had* recognized him.

And in an instant she vanished.

She darted into her own room and locked the door, and sank breathless into the nearest chair.

And there she sat now, with beating heart and burning head, waiting for what should come next.

A rap at the door was the next thing that came.

It frightened her, of course—everything frightened her now.

"Who is that?" she nervously inquired.

"Only me, ma'am. The ladies are waiting luncheon for you. Miss Emma sends her compliments, and says will you come down?" spoke the voice of Sarah, the lady's maid.

"Love to Miss Cavendish, and ask her to excuse me. I do not want any luncheon," answered Mary Grey, without opening the door.

Then she sank back in her chair with throbbing pulses, waiting for the issue of this crisis. She was really ill with intense anxiety and dread. She grew so weak at last that she lay down upon her sofa.

Then came another rap at the door.

"Who is that?" she asked again faintly.

"It is I, dear," answered the voice of Emma Cavendish.

Mrs. Grey arose trembling, and opened the door.

"I was afraid that you were not well. I came up to see," said Emma kindly, as she entered the room.

"I—no, I am not quite well," faltered Mary Grey, as she retreated to the sofa and sat down, with her back purposely to the light, and her face in the shadow.

"You really look pale and ill. What is the matter, dear?"

"I—think I have taken cold. But by keeping my room for a few days I hope to be better. A cold always affects the action of my heart, and makes me very nervous," said Mary Grey, in explanation of the tremors for which she could not otherwise account.

Then Emma expressed sympathy and sorrow, and begged the pretended invalid to have some tea and cream toast, or some wine whey or chicken broth.

But Mary Grey declined all these offers, declaring that a cold always took her appetite away.

And again Emma expressed regret.

And as Miss Cavendish talked, Mary Grey grew more composed.

It was evident, she thought, that Emma as yet knew nothing of that strange rencounter on the stairs.

Presently Miss Cavendish said:

"I am sorry to tell you, that we shall lose Laura Lytton for a few days. Her uncle, Mr. Lytton of Lytton Lodge, has sent a messenger for her. She goes to visit her relations there to-morrow morning."

"Indeed! a messenger?" exclaimed Mary Grey, pricking up her ears.

"Yes, a queer genius, who signalized his entrance into the house by a scene," added Emma, smiling.

"Indeed!"

"Oh, yes. Why, you might have heard the commotion in the front hall! Did you hear nothing of it?"

"No, dear; I have remained shut up in my room ever since breakfast, and have not stirred from it," answered Mary Grey, lying without the least hesitation.

"That accounts for your knowing nothing about it. But the absurd fellow raised quite a confusion, by suddenly falling down in the front hall in a spasm of terror, declaring that he had seen the spirit of his young mistress on the middle landing of the front stairs."

"An optical illusion, of course," answered Mary Grey, in a low, tremulous tone, and with her face carefully kept in the shadow.

"Of course. And it appears that he was once a servant of that reckless and unlucky Frederick Fanning, of White Perch Point, who married my mother's sister. And consequently his young mistress must have been that unfortunate cousin of mine," said Emma, with a sigh.

"Does any one know what ever became of that wretched girl?" inquired Mrs. Grey, in a very low tone.

"No; but I gather from the wild talk of the boy that she is supposed to be dead. It was her spirit that he thinks he saw."

"What ever became of her father and mother?" questioned Mary Grey in the same low tone, and still keeping her face in the deep shadow.

"I do not know; I heard that they went to California. I have not heard anything of them since. But, my dear, you are talking beyond your strength. Your voice is quite faint, scarcely audible indeed. Now I advise you to lie down and be quiet," said Miss Cavendish, with some solicitude.

And then she kissed Mary Grey, begged her to ring for anything she might require, and then she left the room.

And Mary Grey heard no more of the ghost. That cloud passed harmlessly over her head.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

A VISIT TO LYTTON LODGE.

Early the next morning, Miss Cavendish's snug little pony carriage, with a pretty pair of grays, stood before the front door waiting for Laura Lytton.

Old Jerome sat on the front seat to drive.

Taters, with his own horse and the now useless led horse, was in attendance.

Laura Lytton, dressed for her journey and with travelling-bag in hand, stood with Emma Cavendish in the hall, waiting for Mrs. Grey, to whom they had sent a message inviting her to come down and see the traveller off.

But presently the messenger returned with Mrs. Grey's love and good wishes, and request that they would excuse her from coming down, as her cold was so severe that she did not dare to leave her room.

"I must go up and bid her good-bye then," said Laura, as she dropped her travelling-bag and ran up stairs.

She found Mary Grey in a fine white merino dressing-gown, playing the interesting invalid.

She hastily kissed her, expressed a hope that she might find her better on returning to Blue Cliffs, and then ran out of the room and down stairs as fast as she could go.

She had already taken leave of every member of the family except Emma Cavendish, who went out with her to the carriage, saw her comfortably seated in it, and kissed her good-bye.

The little cavalcade then set forward.

It was a lovely spring morning.

The woods and fields were clothed with the freshest green; the mountain tops beamed in the most beautiful opal tints, and the blue sky was without a cloud.

Laura enjoyed her drive very much.

At Wendover they stopped to rest and water the horses, and then they resumed their journey and went on to Lytton Lodge, where they arrived just about noon.

John Lytton was evidently on the look-out for his niece, for as the pony carriage drove up, amid the barking of all the dogs and the shouting of all the little negroes, he rushed out of the house, throwing up his arms; and he caught Laura and lifted her bodily from her seat, roaring his welcome.

And Laura, as she returned his honest, hearty greeting, felt a twinge of self-reproach in remembering with what reluctance she had come.

Uncle John took her into the house and set her down in the hall in the midst of all her relations, who had crowded there to welcome her.

"Lor-lor-lor, John! How dare you ma-ma-make so free as that with Laura, and she a young 'oman?" exclaimed old Mrs. Lytton, as, in her well-known faded calico gown and long-eared muslin cap, she came up and kissed her granddaughter.

"Why, because she *is* a young 'oman of course, and not an old man," said John saucily.

"Why, how much you have improved, child!" said Miss Molly Moss, smiling blandly.

"Oh, *an't* she though neither?" exclaimed Octy and Ulky in a breath, as they seized her hands; the one clinging to her right, and the other to her left.

"Come now, I think you had better let Laura go up stairs and take off her bonnet and things. Dinner's all ready to go on the table. And I reckon her appetite is ready also. And, Jacky, *you* had better go out and tell John Brooks to put up and feed them horses," said practical Aunt Kitty, as she took and faced Laura about toward the spare bedroom that was on the first floor.

"Uncle wrote me that my brother was here. But I don't see him," said Laura, as she laid off her bonnet.

"No, he and Charley went to Perch Point fishing yesterday, intending to stay all night and come back this morning. I reckon they'll soon be here," said Aunt Kitty.

Laura washed her face and hands, and brushed her hair, and put on a clean collar and cuffs, and declared herself ready to join the family.

Even as she spoke there was the hilarious bustle of an arrival in the hall outside.

And as Laura emerged from the room, she was caught in the arms of her brother Alden.

"My darling sister, I am so delighted to see you!" said the young man, kissing her joyously.

"So am I to see you, Alden, dear. But why didn't you accept Mrs. Cavendish's invitation to come and join our Easter party at Blue Cliffs?" inquired Laura.

"My dear, because I thought my duty called me here," gravely replied Alden.

"But for a day or two you might have joined us," persisted Laura.

"No," said Alden. Then turning toward his red-headed fishing comrade, he said:

"Here's Cousin Charley waiting to welcome you, Laura."

And Charley Lytton, blushing and stammering, held out his hand, and said:

"How do you do? I am very glad to see you."

"And now come to dinner," said Aunt Kitty, opening the dining-room door.

They all went in and sat down to as fine a dinner as was ever served in Blue Cliff Hall, or even at the Government House, although this was laid on a rough pine table, covered with a coarse, though clean linen table-cloth, and in a room where the walls were whitewashed and the floors were bare.

"And now," said Uncle Jacky, as soon as he had served the turtle soup around to everybody, "I want you to tell me why you couldn't ride the gray mare, and why you came in a pony carriage with a slap-up pair of bloods?"

"Why, you know, I am a good-for-nothing city-bred girl, Uncle John, and Miss Cavendish knew it, and doubted my ability to ride eighteen or twenty miles on horseback, and so insisted on my having the pony carriage," explained Laura soothingly.

"Well, I'm glad it was no worse. I was thinking may be as you despised the old family mare," said John, somewhat mollified.

"Oh, no, Uncle. Quite the contrary. I did not feel equal to her," laughed Laura.

"Well, when must we send that fine equipage back—to-night or to-morrow?"

"Neither, Uncle John. It is not wanted at Blue Cliffs just at present. They have the barouche, the brougham, and the gig. They can easily spare the pony chaise. And Emma insisted on my keeping it here until I should be ready to return. And I promised her that I would do it."

"Now I don't like that. That is a *patternizing* of us a great deal too much. We've got a carriage of our own, I reckon," said John, sitting back in his chair, and lifting his red head pompously.

"Now—now—now, John Lytton, don't you be a foo-foo-fool! '*Carriage?*' Why, our carriage is all to pieces. An't been fit to use for this six months! And sin-sin-since the Caverndishers have been so obleeging as to lend the loan of the pony shay to Laura, I say let her keep it till she goes back. And while it's a staying here idle, I can use it to go and see some of my neighbors," said old Mrs. Lytton, in that peremptory way of hers that did not brook contradiction from any one, even from the master of the house.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

A FLIGHT FROM BLUE CLIFF.

Laura Lytton staid two days with her relatives at Lytton Lodge, and was just turning over in her mind the difficult subject of breaking the news of her immediate departure to Uncle Jacky, whom she felt sure would bitterly oppose it, when, on the evening of the second day, she received a surprise in the form of a call from Craven Kyte.

The visitor was shown into the big parlor, where all the family, except Alden and Charley, were assembled, and engaged in cheerful conversation around the evening lamp.

He came in bowing, shook hands with everybody, and then took the seat that was offered him, and drew a letter from his pocket, saying humorously:

"In these latter days, when every one has a mission, it seems to me that *my* mission is to fetch and carry letters. I happened to call at Blue Cliffs this morning, and to mention while there that I was going to White Perch Point, and should take Lytton Lodge in my way, and would carry any message that was desired to Miss Laura Lytton, who I understood was on a visit there. And then Miss Cavendish requested me to take a letter to you, which she sat down and wrote right off at once. And here it is, Miss," he concluded, placing the letter in Laura's hands.

Laura asked leave of her company, and then opened the envelope, and read as follows:

"BLUE CLIFFS, Thursday Afternoon.

"MY DEAREST LAURA: The opportune arrival of Mr. Craven Kyte, on his way to White Perch Point and Lytton Lodge, furnishes me with the means of communicating with you sooner than I could manage to do by mail.

"You will be very much surprised at what I am about to tell you.

"MARY GREY HAS LEFT BLUE CLIFFS.

"She left so suddenly that I scarcely yet can realize that she has gone.

"My grandmother and myself opposed her departure most earnestly. We used every means in the world but absolute force to keep her here.

"But she would go. She said her health and spirits required the change. You know she was ailing when you left here.

"Well, she has gone to Charlottesville, where she says she has some lady friend who keeps a boarding-house for the students of the University. So, if your brother returns to the University, he may have an opportunity of renewing his very pleasant acquaintance with her. I do not know when, if ever, she will return.

"Of course this is her home whenever she pleases to come back. But I strongly suspect the pretty little widow has grown tired of our country house.

"You know she has really no resources within herself for enjoyment. She cares nothing for the beautiful scenery surrounding our home, nor for gardening, nor reading, nor visiting and instructing the poor negroes; nor, in short, for anything that makes a remote country place enjoyable. And so she has left us—'It may be for years, and it may be for ever,' as the song says.

"But, my darling, don't *you* desert me, just at this time. Come back, according to your promise. I am wearying for you. Tell that excessively affectionate and hospitable Uncle John that I need you so much more than he does. Or show him this letter. All the Lyttons are gallant and chivalrous gentlemen. He is no exception, and he will not oppose my wish, I feel sure. I shall expect you at Blue Cliffs to-morrow evening.

"My grandmother has just directed me to repeat her invitation to Mr. Alden Lytton, and to ask him to accompany you back to Blue Cliffs and make us a visit. I hope he will do so. Mind, I shall expect you both to-morrow evening. Pray present my respects to Mr. and Mrs. Lytton, and all their kind family. And believe me, dearest Laura,

"Ever your own EMMA.

"*Postscript.*—I have some strange news to tell you which I cannot trust upon paper. I also expect a new inmate in the family. I will explain when you come. E."

Laura folded her letter, and put it into her pocket for the present.

"They want you to come back, I suppose," said Uncle John testily.

"I will show you the letter presently, Uncle; so you can read and judge for yourself," said Laura, with a smile.

"Well, all I say is this: if they want you to come back, want will be their master. For they can't have you; so there now! I don't mean to let you leave us until you are obliged to go back to school. I don't *that!*" said John, nodding his big red head.

"Did you know Mrs. Grey had left Blue Cliffs?" sorrowfully inquired Mr. Kyte.

"Yes. Emma has written to me about her departure. When did she go?"

"Early this morning. When I got to the house, I was very much disappointed at not seeing her, and beyond measure astonished to hear that she had started that very morning to Wendover, to catch the first train to the city, *en route* for Charlottesville. She will be a great loss to the domestic circle at Blue Cliffs, I think."

"And who the mischief is Mrs. Grey?" inquired the sorely puzzled Uncle John.

"She was one of the assistant teachers—the drawing mistress, in fact—at Mount Ascension. But she lost her situation there. And she became the guest of Emma Cavendish. Afterward she was engaged to Mr. Cavendish. But his death prevented the marriage," Laura explained.

And at this point of the conversation "Mandy" made her appearance at the door and said that supper was on the table.

And old Mrs. Lytton arose and invited the company to follow her to the dining-room.

After supper, as it was a clear, mild, star-lit evening, Mr. Craven Kyte remounted his horse and resumed his journey to White Perch Point.

After his departure, when the family were once more assembled in the big parlor, Laura took her letter out and put it in the hands of John Lytton.

Uncle Jacky read it through, and then quoted a part of it to the family circle.

"'Tell that affectionate and hospitable Uncle John that I need you so much more than he does. Or show him this letter. All the Lyttons are gallant and chivalrous gentlemen.' *That's so!" put in Uncle Jacky, nodding his red head.* "'He is no exception. And he will not oppose my wish, I feel sure.'

"Now that is what I call taking a fellow at a disadvantage!" growled John, holding the letter before his eyes, and staring at it. "Well, I suppose I must let you go, Laura, seeing she makes such a point of it. But they want Alden too. And Alden they can't have! Where is the fellow, any how? And why wasn't he at supper?"

"He and Charley are down at Uncle Bob's house, getting bait for another fishing match to-morrow. I told Mandy to keep the supper hot for them," answered Aunt Kitty.

And soon after this, the little family, who kept very early hours, separated to go to rest.

Laura and her two little cousins were the first to leave the room.

Aunt Kitty and Miss Molly followed.

When they were gone, old Mrs. Lytton turned upon her son, and said:

"Jacky, I ho-ho-hope you an't a going to be sich a corntrairy fool as to stand into the light of your own flesh and blood?"

"Why, what the mischief do you mean, mother? I an't a standing into nobody's light, much less my own flesh and blood's!" exclaimed John, raising his red head.

"Yes—yes—yes you are too! You're a standing into your own dear nephew's, Alden Lytton's, light, in opposing of his going to Blue Cliffs along of his sister to-morrow," complained the old lady.

"Riddle-me-riddle-me-ree! I know no more of what your're talking than the fish of Zuyder Zee!"

"Why—why—why—then this is what I'm a talking about. Can—can—can't you see that Emma Cavendish is perfectly wrapped up in Laura Lytton? She's as fon—fon—fond of her as ever she can be. And Emma Cavendish is the most beau—beau—beautiful girl and the richest heiress in the whole State. And Alden Lytton is one of the han—han—handsomest young men I ever saw. And if he goes with his sister to Blue Cliffs— *Don't you see?*"

"No, I don't," said honest, obtuse John.

"Well, then, the gal that is so fond of the sis-sis-sister might grow to be equally fond of the handsome bro-bro-brother. *Now do you see?*"

"Oh, I see!" exclaimed John, with a look of profound enlightenment.

"And I hope you won't go and stand into the light of your own dear nephew by raising up of any objections to his going along of his sister to Blue Cliffs," added the old lady.

"*I* stand in the light of my own poor, dear, dead brother's son! 'Tain't likely!" exclaimed Uncle Jacky, with an injured air.

"No, John, I don't think it is. And so I hope, instead of oppo-po-po-opposing on him, you'll encourage him to go along of his sister to Blue Cliffs to-morrow," said the old lady.

"Mother, I shall do what is right," answered John.

"And lookee here, Jacky! Don't you let on to Alden that any on us have such a thought as him going there to court the heiress, for ef you do, he's so high and mighty he'd see us all furder fust before he'd budge a step to go to Blue Cliffs, sister or no sister. So mind what I tell you, John."

"Mother, I will do all that is right," repeated John, with pompous dignity.

"I only hope as you will. And so good-night, my son," said the old woman, as she lighted her bed-room taper and left the room.

Laura came down stairs early the next morning, and found her brother alone in the big parlor.

And then she showed him Emma Cavendish's letter.

And when he had read it through, she said quite piteously:

"Alden, I *do* want to go back and spend the rest of the Easter holydays at Blue Cliffs, for I love Emma Cavendish better than anybody else in the whole world except yourself. And I hate to disappoint her. But I equally hate to leave *you*, Alden. So I *do* wish you would make up your mind to accept Mrs. Cavendish's invitation and accompany me to Blue Cliffs."

"Why—why—why, of course he will go, Laura. Do you 'spect your own dear brother is a going to let you go off alone, by your own self, of a journey, when he's invi-vi-vited to go along of you?" exclaimed old Mrs. Lytton, who entered at that moment, and spoke up before Alden Lytton could either accept or refuse.

"Certainly he will. Why, nephew's a gentleman, I reckon, and he wouldn't refuse to escort his own dear sister, when he is requested so to do," added Uncle John, as he strode into the room.

Alden Lytton smiled and bowed.

In truth, now that the secret obstacle to his visit to Blue Cliffs was removed by the departure of Mrs. Grey for an indefinitely long absence, he felt no objection at all to accompanying his sister thither. So, still smiling, he answered:

"Why, you all seem to think that I shall make some difficulty about complying with my sister's wishes. But I shall do nothing of the sort. On the contrary, I shall attend my sister with great pleasure."

"That's you!" exclaimed old Mrs. Lytton.

"Bully boy!" heartily cried Uncle Jacky.

"I thank you, Alden," said Laura quietly, giving him her hand.

"Yes, that's all very well; but—" began Charley, who had joined the circle.

"But what? What's the matter with you?" demanded his father.

Charley, seeing all eyes turned upon him, and most especially Laura's, blushed crimson and remained silent.

"I had arranged to go with Charley this morning to fish for trout in the Mad River," laughingly explained Alden.

"Oh, well, it can't be helped. You feel disappointed, of course, my boy; but everything must give way to the will of the ladies, Charley. '*All the Lyttons are gallant and chivalrous gentlemen,*'" said Uncle Jacky proudly, quoting the words of Emma's letter. "And we are no exceptions to the rule. Miss Cavendish is anxious for the society of Laura. Laura wishes the escort of her brother, who has also been invited to Blue Cliffs. We must not oppose the will of the ladies," concluded John, bowing to his niece with pompous deference.

Poor Charley blushed purpler than ever, and holding down his red head—like his father's—he mumbled something about "not wishing to oppose no ladies whatsoever."

"Now, then, what time are you expected at Blue Cliffs?" inquired Uncle Jacky, turning to Laura.

"This evening, uncle. Don't you remember? You read the letter."

"Oh, yes. Well, then, you needn't leave till after dinner. KITTY!" he called to his wife, "order dinner for twelve o'clock noon, sharp! I want Alden and Laura, if they *must* leave, to go with a full stomach; do you hear?"

"Why, of course, Jacky. Don't we always have dinner at twelve o'clock?" laughingly inquired Aunt Kitty.

"Well, then, mind that to-day an't an exception to the rule. Now where's that boy Taters?"

"Here I am, Marse John," said Mithridates, making his appearance with an armful of wood, which he threw upon the fire, for the April morning was chilly.

"Taters," said Uncle John, "you see to having the pony chaise at the door at half-past twelve precisely, to take Mr. Alden and Miss Laura to Blue Cliffs."

"Yes, Marse John."

"And, Taters, you saddle Brown Bill to ride, and wait on them. You hear?"

Taters turned dark gray, and staggered to a chair and sat down.

"Why, what's the matter with the fool now?" demanded Uncle John.

"Oh, Marse John, don't send me to Blue Cliff no more, sir—please don't!"

"Why—*why* shouldn't I send you there, you idiot?"

"Oh, Marse John, I done see the sperrit of my young mist'ess there, and if I see it ag'in I shall die! 'deed, I shall, sir!" exclaimed the shuddering boy.

"What the mischief does he mean, Laura? You look as if you understood him?" inquired John Lytton.

Laura laughingly told the story of the supposed spirit, adding that it must have been a pure hallucination on the part of the boy.

"Well, any how, I'll not send him with you, if he's takin' to making a fool of himself. It wouldn't do, you know," said John.

"And really, uncle, we need no one at all as an outrider," said Laura.

After an early and substantial dinner, Alden and Laura took leave of their kind relatives and entered the pony carriage, whose dashing little grays, driven by old Jerome, were to take them to Blue Cliffs.

But we must precede them thither, to find out what it was that had driven Mary Grey from the house in such very great haste.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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TIME AND THE TRAVELLER.

AN APOLOGUE.

A traveller, contemplating the ruins of Babylon, stood with folded arms, and amid the surrounding stillness thus expressed the thoughts which the scene inspired: "Where, O where is Babylon the Great, with her impregnable walls and gates of brass, her frowning towers and her hanging gardens? Where are her luxurious palaces and her crowded thoroughfares? The stillness of death has succeeded to the active bustle and joyous hilarity of her multitudinous population; scarcely a trace of her former magnificence remains, and her hundreds of thousands of inhabitants have long been sleeping the sleep of death in unknown and unmarked graves. Here thou hast been busy, O Time, thou mighty destroyer!"

The traveller having finished his soliloquy, there appeared before him a venerable person of mild aspect, who thus accosted him:

"Traveller, I am Time, whom thou hast called the mighty destroyer, and to whose ruthless sway thou hast attributed the melancholy desolation which is here spread out to the view. In this charge thou hast wronged me. Mortals have mistaken my character and office. In their pictorial representations I am always exhibited as wielding a scythe, as if my only purpose was to mark my way with havoc. But behold me!—although aged, my step has the elasticity of youth; my hands grasp no instrument of destruction; my countenance expresses no fierce and cruel passions. Deeds of devastation are wrongfully attributed to me, and here I appear to vindicate my name. Since this beautiful world has sprung from chaos, I have lent my aid to perpetuate its beauty, and to impart happiness to its inhabitants. My reign has been mild and preservative. I have marked the course of the sun, the moon and the stars, and during the thousands of years in which they have rolled in mighty expanse, I have diminished naught of their lustre; they shine as bright and as sweetly, they move on their course as harmoniously, as they did when the world was in its infancy.

"Look at the everlasting hills; they stand as proud and as permanently as they did when they rose up at the command of their mighty Creator. Contemplate the ocean in its ceaseless ebb and flow; I have not diminished its mighty resources. But the works of man, you will say, are corroded by my touch, and the beauty and life of man flee before my approach. Even in this you wrong me. I have witnessed the rise and fall of empires, and have seen countless generations of men pass from the stage of human life, but in neither case have I hastened their doom. Sin has been the great destroyer—the vices of men have scattered desolation over the fair face of creation. The thousands who have fallen on that battle-field have not fallen by my hand; the scattered ruins of these once mighty cities, whose memorial has nearly perished, have not been strewn by my hand, but by the hands of earthly conquerors, who have trodden down, in their march of conquest, the palaces of the rich and the hovels of the poor. The great works of man originating in pride, have been subverted by folly and cruelty. Cities once proud, populous, and magnificent, have utterly disappeared, not by the operation of Time, but in the conflicts of men, and in the execution of the just judgments of God.

"Most diseases derive their origin or their virulence from human vice or folly, and wars resulting from the lusts of men, swell the lists of the dead. Many a furrow is marked on the brow of man, which is attributed to Time, in which Time has had no agency; and many totter to the grave who go there prematurely, and not by the weight of years. Men once lived nearly a thousand years, and now they seldom fulfil threescore years and ten. It is not because I am now more emphatically a destroyer, but because their sins and follies have curtailed the term of their existence. Even the works of men in ancient days might have still stood to be gazed upon, if no other influence than mine had been exerted. The stones of Jerusalem's Temple are no longer recognized, but they might now have occupied their place in the glorious structure, had not God otherwise decreed, in punishment of man's sins. Look at the Pyramids of Egypt; there they still stand, the lofty and strong monuments of former ages; I have merely effaced the names of their vainglorious builders. Traveller, I am not a mighty destroyer. I am the friend of man; I afford him precious opportunities; I mitigate his severest woes; I afford him seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, in agreeable vicissitudes. Let him be virtuous, and then it will no longer be said I mar his works."

The venerable personage disappeared when he had thus spoken, and the traveller, mentally acknowledging the justice of his vindication, pursued his travels, to mark with greater discrimination the wide-spread desolation which had been brought into the world by human crime.

◆

A Sister.

He who has never known a sister's kind ministrations, nor felt his heart warming beneath her endearing smile and love-beaming eye, has been unfortunate indeed. It is not to be wondered if the fountains of pure feeling flow in his bosom but sluggishly, or if the gentler emotions of his nature be lost in the sterner attributes of manhood.

"That man has grown up among kind and affectionate sisters," I once heard a lady of much observation and experience remark.

"And why do you think so?" said I.

"Because of the rich development of all the tenderer and more refined feelings of the heart, which are so apparent in every word."

A sister's influence is felt even in manhood's later years; and the heart of him who has grown cold in its chilling contact with the world, will warm and thrill with pure enjoyment, as some incident awakes within him the soft tones and glad melodies of his sister's voice. And he will turn from purposes which a warped and false philosophy has reasoned into expediency, and even weep for the gentler influences which moved him in his earlier years.

◆

BEWARE OF INGRATITUDE.—Insult not misery, neither deride infirmity, nor ridicule deformity; the first shows inhumanity, the second folly, and the third pride. He that made him miserable, made thee happy to lament him; He that made him weak, made thee strong to support him. Do not show thy ingratitude to thy great Creator by despising any of His creatures.

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1872.

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FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1872.

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ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

They Can Never Have but One Mother.

"Children can never have but one mother. Though angels protect them, and gather them under their golden wings, they can never have but one mother."

So spoke an eloquent clergyman, to whom we listened many years ago. His words are true. They were true when they were spoken; they stated a truth which had always existed, and which will always continue to exist, for it is founded in the unchanging laws of human being. The child which loses its mother sustains a loss which, in its very nature, is irreparable.

We do not mean to disparage the conscientious and earnest efforts of many a second wife to perform faithfully all that in her lies of a mother's duties to the children of her predecessor. The difficulty in her way is an insurmountable one, and it consists in the want of a mother's instinct toward the children of another. All the reason, all the education in the world, afford but a poor and inadequate substitute for this divine instinct. The ties which bind a mother's heart are, in their essence, different from those which can ever bind any other to her child.

Solomon never gave a more striking proof of his wisdom than when he ordered the child to be cut in halves and divided between the two women who claimed it. He knew that this would bring out the true instinct of the real mother, and that she would refuse to have it divided, as she did; while the false claimant, though intensely anxious to obtain the child, was willing to see it cut in two rather than to surrender it.

The maternal instinct is equally strong in the lower animals, and if less intelligent than in the human race, is most admirably adapted for the protection of its objects. Birds, in their nature the most timid, become aggressive and fierce toward man, if he disturbs the nests containing their young. And what lad, brought up in the country, has not had many a tiresome chase after a mother bird which affected a broken leg or a broken wing until she had lured him far from the spot where her young treasures were deposited, when she would soar into the air, leaving him to feel like a fool, and to search in vain for the nest which he had stumbled over and disturbed?

There is no substitute for the mother—none which makes her place good. When her form fades from the household, a light has gone out which may be attempted, and may be imitated, but which can never be relumed.

◆

Sunshine in February.

February and March are the two roughest months of the year in the climate of this city. It is not only the high, harsh winds which are disagreeable, but dark clouds cover the sky, or drift swiftly athwart it, helping to make what we call black days. The air is the most unfavorable to the complexion, and fair faces grow dark under its tanning influence.

With all the unpleasant features of these two frowning months, however, there are some extremely pleasant qualities. The days are growing longer, and this, in itself, seems always to exert a cheering influence. And as the days grow longer, the sun, when the sky is clear, grows warmer. There is a peculiar brightness and intensity in the sunshine of the first warm days of February. It seems as if it would penetrate right through the frost that binds up the earth, or the snow that covers it, and awaken from their wintry sleep the roots and the buds of the flowers.

It penetrates the heart of man, and kindles it anew with love for our fellow-men and gratitude to the Creator. Welcome the few but dazzling hours of sunshine in the changeable and harsh month of February!

◆

Burglaries on the Increase.

Burglars seem to be raiding the upper part of Westchester county. In Rye, Mamaroneck, Mount Vernon, Yonkers and Williamsbridge robberies are of almost nightly occurrence. Now and then as many as four contiguous houses are robbed in one night. The burglars take not only silver ware, jewelry and money, but also table-cloths, bedding, wearing apparel, and whatever of value is easily portable. The victimized inhabitants are becoming aroused, and in some places have organized home guards for the purpose of watching for and hunting down the burglars; and the chances are that if any of the villains are caught, they will be accidentally shot in the excitement of the moment.

Be Careful About Anodynes—Another Warning.

We have often cautioned our readers against the danger of administering anodynes to themselves. No one can indulge in such a practice with safety. Many physicians have tried it, and have fallen victims to their temerity.

If physicians, skilled in the use of medicines, cannot administer anodynes to themselves safely, how much greater must be the danger to laymen! Many a death has admonished us of this. All will remember the melancholy end of HALPINE, the poet, which occurred at the Astor House a few years ago, from the use of chloroform, to which he was accustomed, but of which he happened to inhale a little too much.

A short time since a young man, formerly an officer in the English army, died in this city, from an overdose of opium. He was troubled by a cough which kept him awake nights. He took a considerable quantity of laudanum, but it did not put him to sleep. He then sent out, late in the evening, for a bottle of Macmunn's elixir, and having looked in vain at the wrapper for directions how much to take, he swallowed the whole contents of the phial; and the following morning was found dead in his bed.

No person can depend upon the full possession of his reason when under the influence of opium. Consequently, as soon as one has taken a moderate quantity, if there is more within his reach, he is liable, while thus incapacitated to judge correctly what is safe, to take a fatal dose.

Do not take anodynes unless they are prescribed by a physician; and then, invariably, let them be administered according to the physician's directions, by some person other than the one who takes them.

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Domestic Misery—A Wife's Appeal.

Much of the mental as well as of the physical suffering in this world arises from causes which do not seem to exist from necessity, and yet, if remedial, the remedy for such suffering is not always easy to prescribe. Many married couples are wretched for a reason which may be stated in the single word, *Mismated!*

We publish below a letter from an unhappy wife. Her heart is breaking, breaking! because the loneliness of her life is not cheered, the cares of her life are not lightened, by an approving smile and an encouraging word from her husband. One would think that the cause of her unhappiness could be readily removed; but who knows how to implant in her husband's heart the fine instincts of which Nature has left it void? Sunshine is simple enough; but it can come only from the sun. Of what use is it to lecture and upbraid a stolid man, who looks upon his wife only as he regards a useful beast of burden, and who loves her merely because she is his and bears him children, just as he loves his land because he owns it and it bears him crops?

But it will be asked, Must the wretchedness of such a wife continue always? We answer, How can it be helped? She has the society of her children, and their companionship will be constantly growing more and more enjoyable. She has the hope of Heaven! Were she to seek in divorce or separation a refuge from her present troubles, she would only plunge herself into deeper sorrows.

We trust that the example of this wife, permanently unhappy with a husband whom she does not accuse of any vices, may serve as a warning both to young ladies and young men not hastily to ally themselves for life to uncongenial spirits.

"——, January 21, 1872.

"MR. BONNER: After reading the dear old *Ledger* for more than twelve years, I come to you the first time for your opinion and advice. The difficulty is between my husband and myself. We have a family of ten children, the youngest twin girls, just four months old, and I have to do all my work alone, or with very little help from the children; and no matter how I sew, mend, cook, bake, or work, my husband never has an encouraging or cheering word for me, although my health has failed a good deal the last two years, and I am almost broken down with my heavy burdens, for I have no rest, day or night. I am quite a stranger in this place, and he has brought me here to this lonely spot, away from dear friends and church association in the East, where I used to live. I came here trusting his love, and thinking I would sacrifice my own feelings, and hoping that he at least would be kind to me. He said at the time, that it would take me away from all I held dear, and that the people here were not the companions I had been used to all my life; but that he thought he could make a better living here than down East. I came for his sake, and in the two years we have been here, I have borne him three little girls. My friends in the East almost supply us with clothes, so that not a child costs him more than perhaps ten dollars a year at the most. I make over, sew, mend, turn and work every way possible to save him ten cents, and yet he never offers me a shilling of his own accord. If I need a spool of cotton thread, I have to go to him for the price of it. It matters not if he has much or little, he never has any to spare. He is my second husband. I am a German by birth and education, and my people in Germany sometimes send me small sums as presents. He gets it all, and if I want as much as one dollar of it, I must ask for it. He either has it in his trunk, or in his pocket.

"Last Christmas I asked him for but two dollars. I had given him, from money my relatives sent, eighty-six dollars in the space of three months, and he let me ask him three different times for it. He don't drink. I wanted the money for a small Christmas tree for the children. He gave it to me then, but at what a bitter price! I used to go to church, but I am so hampered now with cares and work for little children and the whole family that it is a thing impossible to even think of, and I miss it so much. In my darkest days of widowhood I used to be comforted with a good sermon and hymns. All seems past, and not even a cheering word, a kind look, or a word of encouragement. It is too hard a fate to bear much longer. I am well educated, and long for refined companionship, and the people around here are of the lowest grade of education. Some of them cannot write their own names. If I say I am lonely, he will answer me, that I could go to the neighbors, but I think myself better than they are, and so he calls me 'grand.' Now such is not the case, but these people know nothing to talk about except their neighbors' business, their cows, calves, pigs and farms, and it is ever the same talk the year round. His indifference to my hard lot is slowly but surely killing me. I get so homesick that I sometimes could break my heart with weeping. I have no courage to face another day, and no spirits to wish even for life itself. I loved him, and love him yet. I have done all for him that I or any other mortal possibly could do; but there is no appreciation, no acknowledgment, no anything. I have heard him say that any other woman would have done the same, but I am free to confess that I doubt it. We are not suffering from poverty so much that he could not consider my feelings a little if he wished to, although we are poor and have to work hard.

"I ask not for his money; I ask for his sympathy. I ask not to be free from care and hard work; but I ask for a smile of encouragement, a word of approval—nothing more. And I think any faithful, devoted, hard-working wife, as I have been, would expect the same, and if he loved me truly he would find it in his heart to let me see and know that I please him, or that my economical management gave him pleasure, and not sit with icy indifference and look coldly on my utmost efforts. I at last doubt his love; I imagine he married me to get a housekeeper, and as he thought a wife would be cheaper and handier in a good many ways, he married me. I have told him that I had come to this conclusion at last, but he says he loves me, and won't have it at all that he is wronging me cruelly. I told him I should write to you about it, for the dear *Ledger* is the only solace in my friendlessness and loneliness. Now please give us your impartial opinion, and perhaps you may throw a glimpse of light on my dark lifeway by convincing him that he does wrong me.

"What do you think of my English? I learnt it all of myself, principally from reading English. I have never been in an English school in my life. I was fourteen years old when I came from Germany to this country. By answering this you will eternally oblige me. I shall look for it in every number until I see it. —— ——."

The above letter is very well written; but in the case of the author our language seems to have been an easier acquisition than happiness.

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MY DIOGENES.

MR. BONNER: Having read some time ago that the spirit of Demosthenes had been made available for consultation and the preparation of public speeches, I immediately bethought me what a mine of resources there is unworked—hardly even a shaft yet sunk in it—in these mighty dead of antiquity. Why, sir, a quotation from one of them has sometimes brought down the house. Even to know their names is like a certificate of culture, and Plato, Socrates, and some other ancient worthies, are now commonly admitted to have been so advanced that the nineteenth century had better go back to them.—(I am of Hibernian descent on the mother's side, Mr. BONNER.) Now this being so, to have one of them at one's elbow, a kind of "ready-reckoner," who can fetch and carry, as one may say, is an advantage too obvious to need description. "Webster Unabridged" is nothing to it; the Cyclopedia costs money, and is cumbrous; but a spirit, that neither requires board nor lodging, that has no use for greenbacks, that you can introduce to your friends or not, as is convenient, trotting him out when the scholars are on hand, or laying him aside like a poor relation, when they are not, this, sir, is an acquisition such as has been rarely equalled, and surely never excelled.

I had heard of Diogenes: not much, but I remembered something of his lamp, and supposed him to be one of the very knowing ones. I also recollected something about Alexander the Great and him, I do not remember what. Mr. BONNER, I am in sympathy with the great institutions of this country, and have never lost an opportunity to cast a ballot; but, sir, is a man the worse for rubbing skirts with royalty? I have, in fine, adopted, and with success, the proper measures to secure the invaluable services of Diogenes. What those measures are I only reveal for a consideration—such as I paid myself—and so soon as I have come to understand my "guide, philosopher and friend," and feel at home with him, I count upon doing something that will place me in the very front rank of interviewers.

I say, Mr. BONNER, so soon as I feel at home with Diogenes. I say this advisedly. There is a sort of distance—a seeming want of sympathy—on the part of the venerable spirit—which no doubt time and encouragement will remove. It is a profound gratification to me that he speaks English, as I am not conversant with foreign tongues, though his remarks are not always such as we might expect from one who had the honor to be on terms of freedom with King Alexander.

That he should not at once understand our ways is no more than natural; it has not surprised me, therefore, that he has disclosed a spirit of fault-finding that I did not expect. Even the politeness due to a lady did not prevent his commenting severely on a "reception" card, which afforded my wife uncommon gratification. "You can't talk," he said, "and you can't walk, and you can't sit; you can do nothing but show dress, and curtsey, and stare, and simper, and be stared at, and be off. Deception—that's the word for it."

Mr. BONNER, I am devoted to the beautiful; the "human face divine" charms me, and I gush with delight when my eyes rest on the lovely forms that grace our sidewalks. My feelings are more easily conceived than described when my Diogenes, instead of supplying me with those classic epithets which a man of my profession requires, interpellates—as they say in France—exceedingly curt comments on the most striking ornaments of our city. "Hair—hemp rather—grows in Greece." "Eyes—done up a little, eyebrows specially—" "cheeks painted—nature beaten rather—" "divine form! guess not—the gods don't poise figures on heels like those"—these and such rude and offensive remarks offend my natural gallantry. Mr. BONNER, can there be any mistake? Is this the real Diogenes? Was there any but one?

Having some idea that the ancients had not our church privileges, I was eager to introduce him to them, and chose a highly respectable temple—I call them all temples, as being impressive. But his temper was lost on the way. Catching sight of a tin plate nailed to a tree on one of our finest streets, and opposite a handsome mansion, with the legend "Egyptian hair dye" thereon, he broke out violently, and would hardly be content till I had called at the house and denounced the outrage. "Call us heathen, barbarian!" he muttered, "why, this is the real barbarism!"

But how did he like the privileges? Mr. BONNER, I could not draw him in. Approaching the vestibule of the sacred edifice—thus I vary my language in my communications to the papers—his eye fell on the inscription in front which introduced "Peter Linden, sexton and undertaker," with his business address. Diogenes became violent, used bad language, called it monstrous, raved about the Athenians, and would not enter. I urged that people must die—the church knew that; and in a Christian country be buried; and they would of course need an undertaker. In vain. "Die! yes, and be born too—why isn't the doctor's name up there? and the monthly nurse's?—and they'll be sick—why isn't the druggist's?" And growling out other questions not fit to be written to you, sir, he resisted successfully my efforts to bring him within.

Mr. Editor, I confess to some feeling of disappointment. Can I have made a mistake? Was Diogenes this sort of person? Is there any name like Diogenes I could have confounded with it—Hermogenes, or the like? You appear to know a good deal of everything, and to be very ready with information. Can I have made a mistake?

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In Search of a Daughter-in-Law.

A letter from Pekin gives an interesting account of the efforts of the Chinese to find a wife for their boy Emperor, who is not yet half through his 'teens. Couriers are sent all through the empire to hunt out the most beautiful girls, and all the office holders are also on the look-out for the same. The girls are sent by hundreds to Pekin, where they are subjected to a rigid scrutiny by the boy's mother, who holds the rank of Empress Dowager. At last accounts, she had not yet found a daughter-in-law to her liking. The young Emperor has nothing to say about it. He must take for his first wife, or rather for wife No. 1, who will be Empress, whomsoever his mother shall choose for that position, and will never see her till the morning of the wedding-day. His other four or five hundred wives will also be selected by his mother; but when he comes of age he can have all their heads cut off, if they do not suit him, and recommence housekeeping on an entirely new basis.

◆

The Fastest Time Ever Made—A Mile in 2:16.

The Turf, Field and Farm says: "DEXTER trotted a mile and twenty-seven feet at Buffalo in 2:17¼, and a mile on Fashion track, Long Island, in 2:16." The latter was not, technically speaking, a "record," as the *Turf* states, but it is a fact, and was recorded as such in the *Turf, Field and Farm*, as well as the *Herald, Tribune*, and all the other daily papers at the time.

A LETTER TO MR. BONNER ON HIS COMING ATTACK OF GOUT.

MY DEAR MR. BONNER: Are you sure that it was *rheumatism* that laid you up? People get fancies into their heads sometimes, and have imaginary pains. Is one likely to have the rheumatism and not know it? What sort of an affection is it? Tell us all about it. Are the sensations pleasing, or otherwise? I inquire, because I may have had it myself, and through ignorance of the symptoms, have been unconscious of it, which is an experience that no intelligent man would choose to have.

A little later—I have found out! You need not trouble yourself to describe it. I congratulate you! Not so much for present benefits, as for good prospects. You are a rising man in the world! Rheumatism is well enough as a beginning. It is, however, democratic. There is no sign of gentility in it. The plainest people have it. A poor man may have the rheumatism as ably as a rich man.

It is not, then, your present enjoyment that leads me to felicitate you. It is the prospect that you will soon have the *gout*. *That* will be a distinction indeed! It is not every man capable of rheumatism that may aspire to *gout*. It is a well-to-do affection, with a liking for celebrities. It is hardly less than a testimony of Nature that a man is famous. Chatham had the gout; so had the late Lord Derby; so had Spurgeon; so had Chapin. Are you quite sure that your late illness was not incipient gout? If you cannot honestly claim that, is there no way of commuting? If possible, by all means have the gout! We who have written on the *Ledger* for so many years would feel so proud if we had a leader counted worthy to have gout. It would throw an air of respectability over us all.

Quite aside from *our* enjoyment of your gout, there are many advantages accruing to *you*. It will give you a lawful liberty of "blowing out" when you feel cross. It will give you all the rights of an arbitrary monarch without the odium which attends their exercise. For you to have the softest armchair will no longer be selfish. You can have two chairs if you wish, even if others stand up. Men are ashamed to *cry*, as they used to do when boys, on occasion of stubbing their toes vehemently; but, when the gout gives you an extra twist, you can roar at your best, like a respectable bull; or you can cry to your heart's content, without any one's having a right to wonder or protest.

You are a little quick, I believe, in temper. That is not wise or permissible when a man has no gout. But if he *has*, and some one sits down on the possessed leg, he has a perfect right to let fly the other foot and accompany the action with some suitable words. It is a part of the prerogative of gout to do so.

While you sit with bandaged feet perched up upon a chair, you can receive the remarks of your friends with such pleasure as may chance to be hidden in them. "Why, BONNER," says one, "I always thought you were living a little too fast! The fact is, you showed it a long time." Another one says, "BONNER, you must change your *wine*. That *Port* is too heavy. It naturally runs to gout. Take Rhine wines, my good fellow. They are wholesome."

"Why, BONNER," says another, "I always thought you a temperate fellow. You don't look like a man that indulges. But murder will out. I suppose you *have* to go to Delmonico's, and here and there to public dinners. These turtle soups are too much, even for editors!"

Your doctor will edify you with remarks upon your "arthritic diathesis"—will assure you that this is genuine "*Podagra*"—that he had long suspected it;—that he never knew a case of inflammation confined to the metatarso-phalangeal joint of the great toe, that did not hint the disposition to gout.

If you have had only a plain rheumatism, you have my best wishes for the gout on the next occasion. And if you are confined to your house long, perhaps you would like me to come over and read to you some edifying work—say Shedd's History of Doctrines—or perhaps you would turn over *Dexter* to me for an airing? Yours truly,

H. W. BEECHER.

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A Sad, Sad Story—Let Young Men Remember It.

In the year 1857, a young journeyman printer came to New York from Suffolk, Va. His name was THOMAS C. WOODWARD. He was an honest, good-natured, hard-working country boy. He obtained a situation on the *Tribune*, and became an expert type-setter. He was intelligent and studious, and developed unusual capacity for acquiring all manner of useful information. He became a favorite in the *Tribune* office, and among printers generally, and was looked upon as a young man who was certain to attain a high position in life. He earned from twenty-five to thirty dollars by working five days in a week, and devoted Saturday to recreation. At first he made good use of his leisure time, but after a while he began to spend it in fashionable saloons, where he formed the acquaintance of rich young men, with whom his talents and accomplishments made him a favorite. His association with those young men led him to vie with them in dress and fashionable extravagance, which pressed him for funds. Having become an expert billiard player, he sought to turn his skill to account by playing for money. This led to gaming generally, and also to other vices. He took to drink, "moderately" at first, but soon drank deeply.

Meantime the war had come on, and bounty-jumping was in vogue. Young WOODWARD went into that, and made large sums by it. He turned his back on type-setting as something beneath his dignity, and boasted that thenceforth he should "live like a gentleman." Of course his prosperity was short-lived. His extravagance consumed his ill-got gains. The war came to an end, and so did bounty-jumping. The misguided young man became poor and broken in health, and was glad to return to his old trade, to earn bread. But his skill was gone; his endurance was gone; his popularity was gone; his health was gone. He was a stranded wreck. His case was hopeless. Consumption had seized him, and the shadows of death were rapidly closing around him. At last he could no longer earn enough to pay for the barest necessaries of life. He could not pay his board, and was turned into the street. There, one cold night recently, he was found, thinly clad, and coughing and shivering, by an old chum who used to set type with him on the *Tribune*. He was in the last stages of consumption, and constantly complained of being cold.

"I'm so cold," he said. "I haven't been warm for a month. Oh, if I could only get warm! Can't you take me somewhere where I can get warm? I'm so cold!"

The poor fellow was taken to Bellevue Hospital, where he was kindly nursed and had every comfort. He was very thankful for the kindness shown him. He used to say, "It's real nice here; it's so warm. I haven't been cold since I've been here." But death had set its seal on him. He soon died, and was buried by his brother printers.

Such is the story of the life of a young printer who came to New York city fifteen years ago, with the chance for as bright a future as ever dawned upon a poor young man. His fate is full of instruction and of warning, because it admonishes us of the smooth and slippery paths which slide swiftly down to death, into which young men who are not viciously inclined, but only easy-going and yielding in their nature, are always liable to fall.

Remember that the glass, taken indifferently and through courtesy to a companion, to-day, becomes a habit and necessity to-morrow.

◆

DON'T CARE.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

"Well, I don't care." The lips were fair,
The words not wisely said,
And angry Nell knew very well
She could have trusted Ned
When, speaking low, he whispered, "No,
Not coming, dear, to-night:
Something to do I can't tell you;
You'll trust me, Nell? all's right."

"Go, Edward, go." Ah, don't you know
That fatal sign of old,
When nickname sweet, lips won't repeat,
But full name long and cold?
"Why, Nell!" he said, and turned his head.

* * * * *

And that was how they parted.
The quarrel grew between the two,
Till both were bitter hearted.

Gossip came in with wordy din,
And true tale strangely altered,
Till Nelly crept away and wept,
And "don't care" softly faltered.
By moonlit door, Ned came no more,
Nor turned his head for greeting;
Nay, deacons said, with shaking head,
Ned came no more to meeting.

And so at last, like vision past,
That sweet love-life was ending;
For links of gold had loosed their hold,
Past mortal goldsmith's mending.
When, lo! a cry! a firelit sky,
A shout at midnight waking,
With crash and fall of crumbled wall,
Of timbers rocked and breaking.

When, pale and fair, through deadly glare,
Looked Nellie, white with terror,
One spirit brave, across a grave,
Saw love, forgot the error.
Heedless of cry that bid him fly,
Blinded and singed Ned found her;
From fiery blast safe wrapped at last,
His strong arms folded round her.

The pale lips stirred, the night-wind heard,
And this her speech confided:
"Well, Neddy, there—I care, I care."

* * * * *

And now the day's decided.
Her hands enfold a ring of gold,
Best given late, than never;
Ned's hard-won gift, through evening thrift,
It keeps her trustful ever.

◆

PUNISHMENTS AND REWARDS OF AUTHORS.

The epistles which public persons receive, if published, would not be credible. Begging letters are a matter of course; often in the highwayman style of—"hand over and deliver." I had one recently, from a perfect stranger, who wished a cool hundred or so, and mapped out the circuitous way in which it was to be sent, so that "his folks needn't know it," with a belief in my spooniness, which an acquaintance with me would scarcely have warranted. Following close on the heels of this, came another from a woman, whose ideas of my spare time, and common-sense, were about equally balanced. This stranger of the female persuasion, being hard-up for amusement, wished "a long racy letter from me, such as I alone could write, with no religion in it, because she got enough of that from the minister's wife." It is unnecessary to add that both these missives found a home in my waste paper basket. Autograph letters I do not object to, as they keep me in postage stamps, and my little "Bright Eyes," in cards to draw dogs and horses upon.

A friend of mine has been delivered from manuscripts sent for perusal, with the modest accompanying request to find a publisher for the same, by stating her price to be $200. She has received no request of the kind since this announcement.

These are some of the annoyances of authors; but verily they have their rewards too. Here comes a letter from my native State, Maine; with a box of wood mosses and berries to place round the roots of my house plants; and as an expression of affection from a stranger who knows from my writings how well I love such things. She says, in closing, that she hopes that myself and Mr. Beecher will continue to write for the *New York Ledger* so long as she lives to read it. Mr. Beecher may step up and take his half of this sugar-plum, since he has announced himself a champion of "candy."

Then before me on my desk, is a smiling baby face sent by its parents, who are strangers to me, if those can be strangers whose hearts warm toward each other; sent me, they add, "not for a silver cup, but because some chance words of mine touched their hearts, and so this little one was named Fanny Fern."

She smiles down upon me whether my sky be cloudy or clear, and in the light of that smile I will try to write worthily; for "their angels do always behold the face of my Father." FANNY FERN.

◆

The Monsters of the Navy—A Letter from an Old Man-of-War's-Man.

FEBRUARY 1st, 1872.

ROBERT BONNER, ESQ.—*Dear Sir:* I see in your last paper a piece about Commander SEMMES. He is not the only monster of the kind; the navy is full of them. I, for one, will say that it was a bad day for Jack when flogging was done away with. A captain could give a man but twelve lashes then with the cat, and it was over. I was in the navy before flogging was abolished, and once since, and I say the punishment now is by far more severe than it was then.

On board of that vessel we had what was called a *sweat-box*—a box say seven feet in height, with only room for a man to stand upright with his hands by his side; or, as I have seen them, ironed behind their backs. Holes were bored in the upper part of the box to let in air.

Another form of punishment was lashing a man up in the rigging for two and three hours, *with his bare feet on the rattlin*. To any one not used to going barefooted, that punishment is very severe. But that was some years back; and I have no doubt but that a variety of new ways of punishment have been studied out by some of the devils incarnate wearing the naval uniform. And you have no idea how many of that stripe there are.

However, I am happy to say that they are not all so. I was with Captain ——, long since dead, who seemed to take delight in flogging the men. He was not allowed to strike a man but twelve times, but he would make the boatswain's mate pause at each stroke, so as to lengthen out the punishment as long as he could; and there was always some one on the master-at-arm's list for punishment.

That captain was relieved, and Captain ——, —God bless him—was ordered to the ship. Captain MCKEEVER never punished a man the first time he was brought up before him. And what a difference in the ship's company! The work of the ship was done better, and the men were cheerful and happy. What different fighting that ship's company would have made under the two captains!

And now, Mr. BONNER, say and do all you can for poor Jack, for his lines are seldom cast in pleasant places either on shore or afloat. I was nine years in the navy, and know something of it.

AN OLD MAN-OF-WAR'S-MAN.

◆

A Bad Sunday's Business.

[From the Poughkeepsie Eagle.]

On Sunday, the 20th inst., Seth Kenner, of Patterson, son of Abram Kenner, went hunting. After spending the day in search of game he returned home. In taking the gun out of the wagon, it was accidentally discharged, the contents of both barrels lodging in his arm, and shattering the bone in a terrible manner. Drs. Smith, Wheeler, Bennett and Hobbs were called, and after consultation, concluded to amputate the arm, which they did on Monday morning. The unfortunate young man died on the afternoon of the same day.

LOOK AHEAD.

BY CALEB DUNN.

Look not back upon the past,
Save to profit by its teachings;
To experience hold fast,
Only to regard its preachings:
Dark the dead days may have been,
With that blindness born of sin,
Yet there's brightness you may win—
Look ahead!

See yon ship that cleaves the wave
Stormy is the angry billow,
Yet she sails on firm and brave,
Though each mast bends like a willow:
Back, is sure disaster dire;
Forward, hope burns like a fire,
Flames of which shall ne'er expire—
Look ahead!

Better far the will that keeps
Fast by long, though vain endeavor,
Than the energy that sleeps,
And lies dumb in sloth forever;
Ill success may mark the past,
But with hope nailed to the mast,
Victory shall come at last—
Look ahead!

History with names is bright
That shall ever live in story,
Names of men who braved the fight
Patiently, and purchased glory.
Let their grand examples be
Stars to guide you o'er life's sea
To the port of destiny—
Look ahead!

One looked back and lost the prize,
When she fled from Sodom burning,
And a pillar 'neath the skies
She became for backward turning.
Look not back, where'er you stand;
Keep up heart and nerve your hand,
And you'll reach the Promised Land—
Look ahead!

* * *

FILIPPO, THE BANDIT;

OR, THE

Necromancer of Monte Gargano

By CARLOTTA KINGSLEY,
AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERY OF NO. 27."

CHAPTER XV.

"IL SACO! IL SACO!"

Adrian of Palermo drew wholly upon his imagination when he told the persecuted Bianca that her lover, Angelo Capello, had been thrown into the dungeons of San Gregore.

That young nobleman had not reached Foggia, but his arrival was hourly expected, and the Marchesa's impatience that her plans should not be deranged by his coming was so sincere, that Adrian's pique readily prompted the false tale which so overwhelmed the Signorita.

At the very moment when Adrian was bearing his unconscious burden into the Marchesa's *salon*, two bands of men might have been seen approaching the town from different directions.

The first and most noticeable of these two bands was composed of a company of horsemen nobly mounted, handsomely attended, and accoutred in a manner that indicated high rank and business of no ordinary character.

They were led by a young man of a peculiarly graceful and prepossessing appearance. His handsome form was fitly encased in Milan armor of the lightest steel and finest temper. Over this mailed habit he wore a silken doublet, which partially concealed the military appearance of the rider.

His countenance was preëminently noble and commanding. Every feature was luminous with that light which is reflected from a pure and upright heart, and the smile which occasionally overspread his face, as he conversed with his companions, never failed to strengthen the impression which his appearance alone always produced.

He rode with the ease and grace of one whose home might almost be said to be the saddle, and the movements of man and beast were in such accord that even the fabled Centaur could not have seemed more like one being.

He was followed by a train of twenty-five or thirty horsemen, and they all rode rapidly, as though they were bound upon a mission of more than ordinary importance.

Their grave countenances, compressed lips and straightforward gaze betokened men who had a firm purpose before them, and who were determined to accomplish that purpose at any cost.

The leader of this band was Angelo Capello, and he was returning to Foggia after an absence of many weeks among foreign states, whither, as before intimated, he had been dispatched upon momentous official business.

As the town toward which they were hastening broke upon the view of the horsemen, their countenances became less rigid, for the journey had been a hard one. They were nearly overcome with fatigue, and the perils which threatened the little band if they remained longer in the open country, were neither few nor insignificant.

"May the saints grant we may not be too late!" exclaimed a cavalier who rode at Capello's side. "Pray, Signor, can you see whether or not the colors of France float from the citadel?"

"'Tis yet too dark to distinguish anything," replied Capello. "But rest assured, if the brave Marchese Strozzi lives, the French are not yet masters of Foggia."

"But the Marchese cannot contend single-handed with the whole French army," the other remarked.

"I have faith to believe that fortune would so favor Strozzi, that either by strength or stratagem he would keep the enemy at bay until the arrival of aid."

"But our last dispatches were so discouraging. It is possible he has given up all hope of succor, and has made the best terms he was able with the enemy."

"I will not believe it," Capello proudly replied. "I know the Marchese well. He loves his country too dearly to sacrifice her honor while even a forlorn hope remains."

"But we know not what his necessities may be, so let us press on still faster."

With spur and voice he spurred his nearly spent animal into a brisker pace.

"Hold, Capello," his companion cried. "Your steed may be of a mettle that can stand a brisker trot, but there are others here that cannot. We must not break our ranks, so it were best if you could curb your impatience—or your love."

Capello glanced quickly at the speaker, and the other as quickly continued:

"You have doubtless heard, Signor, that love is winged, and disdains the aid of spurs or the delay of jaded steeds. But the fair Signorita whom you are so impatient to behold, would be better pleased to have us delay your arrival, than that you should be brought into her presence senseless, or perhaps dying. The campagna has ever abounded with desperadoes who would not hesitate to attack a single horseman, though our present numbers would intimidate them."

"Your advice is doubtless good, Signor," replied Capello, reining in his horse to a more moderate pace. "But tell me, how did you so truly guess one reason of my impatience to be in Foggia?"

"By a test that never fails. A patriot who grieves for his country laments in one manner, and the lover who sighs for his mistress mourns in another. I am not an old man, yet I have lamented the loss of both country and mistress, and so can tell the difference."

"But my mistress is not lost," said Capello. "Though the heavens may fall, the love of Bianca Strozzi is mine; even in death she will be true."

Luigi, he who rode at Capello's side, shrugged his shoulders.

"Again I say I am not an old man, yet I have lived long enough to know that a lover is a lover as long as he is in sight, but when he is away, his place is readily filled by another."

"Another insult to the Strozzi and I will unhorse thee!" cried Capello. "Flippant Signoritas may have played you false, but she upon whose love I depend is not so faithless."

"Hot-headed and true-hearted like them all!" said Luigi under his breath.

Then he added aloud:

"I meant no insult to the Strozzi, Capello. 'Twas but a friend's duty to curb thy ardor—and it would have done no harm," he hastily continued, seeing his companion about to reply. "If you find her still true, you will love her the more that she is so; and if false, the warnings of a friend will be remembered with thankfulness."

"Such friendly warnings have a sting in them that is not easy to bear," was Capello's sullen reply. "Yet we will not quarrel, Luigi; there are already enough divisions in the camp, without life-long friends turning against each other."

He reached out his hand, and the other clasped it warmly.

"I grant you the Signorita is a peerless maid, and I hope she is an example to every other Signorita in the land," Luigi remarked. "Nevertheless—"

Capello quickly interposed.

"Nevertheless we will not continne the subject further," he said. "I would not hesitate to wager my life and my honor that if I find her at all, I shall find her true."

"The Marchesa is a scheming jade," was the discourteous and insinuating remark which Luigi next made.

"Well?"

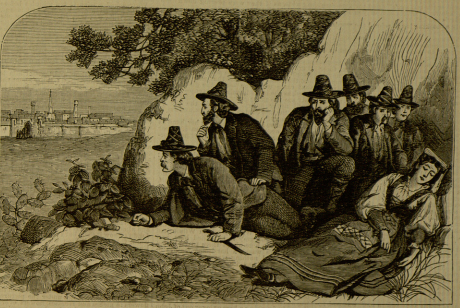
"Well, it is possible she may have handsomer hopes for her fair daughter than the Signorita herself may entertain."

Capello shrugged his shoulders, and exclaimed impatiently:

"Why are you so wilful, Luigi? Have you not heard me twice or thrice dismiss this subject?"

Luigi looked keenly at his companion. A shade of compassion passed over his countenance. Drawing nearer his companion, he said, in a lower tone:

"'Tis true I am wilful in this matter, but 'tis for a kind purpose, Giacomo met us yesterday, on his way from Foggia to Rome. You remember Giacomo, do you not?"



THE SIGNORITA BIANCA STROZZI TAKEN PRISONER BY THE BANDITTI.

"Your brother?"

"Aye."

"Assuredly."

"He left Foggia but a day or two before he met us."

"What news did he bring? Why did you not tell me of this before?"

"Because the only news he brought was ill news."

"Ill news? Of what nature? Speak quickly, and tell me, Luigi. Was the town safe? Was the Marchese well? Was Bianca—"

"Hold, Signor! I cannot reply to all your questions in a breath. The town is still safe, but there were rumors of a threatened attack as soon as the French King should leave Naples. The Marchese was said to be ill when Giacomo left, but he knew not whether the reports were true or false."

"And Bianca?"

Liugi was silent, but fixing his eyes upon Capello with a sympathetic glance, the latter instantly became alarmed.

"What said he of the Signorita?" he demanded.

He laid his gauntleted hand upon Liugi's arm, and clasping it with a vice-like grip, he again hoarsely exclaimed:

"What of the Signorita? Has any evil befallen her? Is she ill? Is she dying? Is she dead?"

"Neither, yet worse."

"Worse?"

"Worse for you, Signor."

Capello relaxed his hold upon Liugi's arm, and loosening the fastenings of his corslet, which seemed to press upon his breast too heavily, he again demanded, but in a fainter voice, the nature of this direful news.

Liugi noted the pale face and the heaving breast of his friend, and almost regretted having broached a subject so intimately connected with Capello's happiness. Yet having once done so, he found himself obliged to proceed:

"Giacomo may have been mistaken, Signor."

"Don't make any attempt to break the news softly. Whatever it may be, name it boldly. I am able to bear it."

He drew himself up more proudly, and turning a firm though pallid face upon his companion, waited for him to proceed.

"Giacomo brought word that the Signorita was betrothed to Vicenzio Concini."

Capello's horse took a sudden, vaulting leap into the air, and then dashed madly forward over the plain.

Liugi set spurs to his horse to follow, and the other horsemen did the same, but Capello did not compel them to pursue him far. He turned his horse's head, after a few mad bounds, and returned to his place at the head of the cavalcade.

"Did I rightly comprehend you, Liugi?" he said. "Did you tell me that Concini had supplanted me?"

"Yes, Signor."

"Then it's the Marchesa's work," cried Capello, after a moment's painful pause.

"'Tis true, the Marchesa is believed to have planned it all; yet without the consent of the Marchese, and of the Signorita herself, her plans would have come to naught."

"The Signorita *never* consented!" exclaimed Capello. "She may have been threatened, persecuted, cajoled. Yet no—I will never believe that *anything* could force her to forget the love she once promised me. I tell you, Luigi, if this is really as you say, there is some foul work in progress in yonder town. Bianca Strozzi would not so soon forget."

"Have a care, Signor; be not so sure of your ground," said the warning voice of Luigi. "A woman is a woman, and an absent lover—"

Again Capello turned upon his friend, and the latter, intimidated by the fierce fire which burned in his eyes, held his peace, and left the insinuating words unspoken.

"May the saints grant we may not be too late!" ejaculated Capello, unconsciously echoing the aspiration which had opened the conversation.

"Amen!" was the equally fervent response; and as by this time the cavalcade had reached the gates of the town, the two friends rode on in silence, each too much occupied with painful thought to continue a conversation which certainly had proved far from pleasant.

This noble band was the first of the two bands which approached the town of Foggia in the early dawn.

The other party was in every respect unlike the one just described. It consisted of six pedestrians, scantily dressed, and with countenances marked by every ferocious attribute.

They hurried forward like men bent upon some foul and secret errand, and as they skulked across the plain, they picked their way in the shadow of such low bushes as grew in their path, that thus their approach might not be so readily detected.

Their leader, a tall mountaineer, of even fiercer aspect than the others, stalked steadily forward in advance of his men, and never exchanged a word with his fellows unless necessity demanded it, and then his orders were delivered in a quick, authoritative way which admitted of neither question nor delay.

He had nearly reached the gates of Foggia when the leader halted, and giving an impatient order to his followers, they suddenly fell upon their faces on the earth in the shadow of the high battlements.

In this position, with heads partly raised, they saw in the indistinct light a company of handsomely mounted cavaliers pass into the town.

"Quick, comrades!" cried the chieftain, springing to his feet. "The gates are opened earlier than usual this morning. We must lose not a moment! The tramping of that band will wake whatever quarter it passes through. May the devil keep them from taking the road to the palazzo!"

The leader's example was followed by his men, and all springing forward, they managed to pass through the gate without being too closely questioned by the sleepy warder.

The horsemen took one route, and the six pedestrians took another. The pace of the horsemen was slow, while that of the pedestrians was rapid. By different routes both directed their steps toward the palazzo.

The huge edifice had not yet bestirred itself to welcome the opening day. Only at one window did there appear any signs of life, and from that a feeble light blinked drowsily at the dawn.

The footmen reached their destination many moments before the mounted cavaliers. They readily scaled a low parapet without difficulty; they eluded the single sentinel who guarded that part of the palazzo, and then ensconced themselves under the window of the room from which the light blinked drowsily upon the dawn.

The window was open, and the voices of those within came distinctly to their ears.

A young girl's voice cried in piteous tones:

"Not yet! not yet! Wait but one more day, and I will no longer refuse! Only one day more, Marchesa! Only one!"

The leader of the band without the window raised his head cautiously and peered into the room.

It was a handsome *salon*, and within it there were three ladies, a priest, a cavalier and a physician.

"One for each of us," whispered the leader to his men.

"To carry or to kill?" was the significant query.

"Kill, if necessary; they're not worth carrying. Leave the Signorita to me. *Now!*"

With the word they made a simultaneous leap over the low window-sill.

Screams, quickly silenced by heavy blows, followed. A short struggle ensued, and then the *salon* was vacated as quickly as it had been invaded.

Though only a moment had sufficed for this inroad, direful traces were left of the sudden visitation.

The Marchesa Strozzi and Inez Maestrelli lay senseless upon the floor, felled by the barbarous blows of banditti. Concini, who had valiantly attempted to defend himself and his companions, lay upon the floor, also bleeding profusely. Adrian of Palermo, who out of sheer cowardice had skulked away at the first note of alarm, also lay beside him, for the instinct of self-preservation did not shield him from harm.

The priest was unscathed, but stood with his missal in his hand, trembling with dumb dismay.

And the Signorita?

She was gone!

The leader of the banditti had caught her in his arms. One wild shriek and cry for mercy escaped her, and then she too was made silent by a method short, severe and effective.

Swung lightly across the shoulders of the chieftain, Bianca was speedily borne away from the palazzo.

As easily as they entered the *salon* the bold outlaws left it. Again the sentinel was eluded, the low parapet scaled.

The jaded horsemen were just entering the *strada* as the last bandit turned an opposite corner. The sleepy warder at the gate did not trouble himself to closely observe the six men who sauntered away from town at that early hour and took their way to the mountains.

In the Marchesa's *salon*, Adrian of Palermo was the first to recover his voice and his senses.

Gathering himself up from the floor as speedily as possible, he ran to the open window to give a mad alarm, but having been taught a lesson in discretion only a moment before, he retired to a safe distance within the apartment, where, raising both hands to his lips, he sent forth the resounding cry of:

"*Il saco! Il saco!*"

It was a cry which, even at this day, will throw a whole Italian quarter into paroxysms of terror.

Distant sleepers, aroused by Adrian's stentorian notes, raised their heads from their pillows, and then burying them again beneath the coverlet, besought the Virgin and every holy saint to protect them from the banditti that were abroad.

The cry reached the ears of Angelo Capello and his followers. Putting spurs to their more than jaded steeds, they speedily found their way to the place whence the cries came.

A moment more, and the foremost were within the *salon*.

"What mean these cries?" demanded Capello, of Adrian, who still continued his frenzied shout.

"Look about you, Signor, and judge for yourself," was the reply. "Yonder lie the Marchesa and the Signora Inez Maestrelli. Signor Concini too, and myself, have not escaped unharmed, and—"

"But what is the cause of all this mischief? Where is the Signorita Bianca?"

Adrian suddenly stopped short, and stared fixedly at the questioner. A low cunning took the place of abject terror, and unworthy schemes instantly began to seethe in his brain.

"Answer quickly, or by the honor of a Capello you shall suffer for this lagging. Where is the Signorita? Did the banditti carry her away?"

Capello placed his foot upon the window seat to start in pursuit, for the bare thought of such a fate befalling his beloved was madness.

But Adrian quickly interposed.

"No, Signor, the young lady is safe."

The priest opened his lips to speak, and to refute Adrian's falsehood, but the latter, with a threatening gesture, silenced him.

"'Tis as I say, holy Father. The Signorita is safe."

Capello glanced from one to the other, and still kept his foot upon the window ledge.

"Which of you may I believe?" he demanded. "Remember that if either deceives me he shall pay dearly for it. Father, did the banditti do aught else than what I see before me? Was the Signorita Bianca in this *salon* a moment ago?"

Adrian fixed his eye upon the priest again, and the latter, a weak tool of the Marchesa and her co-conspirators, forgetting in his fear all humanity and truth, feebly replied as Adrian would have him.

"Then let us assist these poor unfortunates," Capello said, coming into the room from the window. Yet before he did so, he ordered certain of his followers to follow the marauders and attempt to capture them.

"'Tis a hopeless task, I know," he said to Luigi, "but even an unsuccessful effort in the right direction may be a benefit to some one."

Assisted by Luigi and one or two others, he soon succeeded in restoring the Marchesa and her confidante to consciousness.

The Signora looked upon the strange faces around her with open fear.

"Do not be alarmed," said Capello. "We are not the monsters who entered here a while ago and dealt such dastardly blows. We came too late to avert them, but perhaps we may remedy the evil the banditti have done."

The lady was profuse in her thanks. The injuries she had received were not of a serious character, so the Marchesa and Concini next claimed the attention of Capello.

Both had been restored to their senses by the efforts of Adrian, and he had also managed to whisper in their ears certain hints which were accepted by the Marchesa and her friend.

Concini's wounds were of a painful and serious character. To do the cavalier justice he had made a gallant defence, and yielded at last after a desperate struggle, in which his antagonist was nearly as roughly handled as himself. One fainting fit succeeded another with such rapidity that the Marchesa, herself now fully recovered, dispatched attendants for medical aid, and ordered him conveyed to his own apartments.

"A word with you, Excellenza," said Capello, when the Marchesa dismissed the throng of attendants who were attracted to the *salon* from all parts of the palazzo by the uproar. "I linger, however inopportunely, to announce my arrival in Foggia, and to beg you will immediately favor me with an audience with the Marchese."

"'Tis impossible," she replied, chafing with impatience, for the words that Adrian had whispered in her ear made her nearly frantic with anxiety.

"Why impossible?" Capello calmly inquired.

"Impossible because the Marchese is no more."

The young nobleman fell back, struck to the heart with surprise and grief.

"The Signorita!" he murmured. "Where is the Signorita?"

"She is doubtless safe," was the haughty reply, and forgetting all courtesy, all policy, and all kindliness, the Marchesa swept from the room.

Adrian of Palermo met her in the little oratory to which she directed her steps.

The lady's face was flushed with excitement, and there was a look of angry desperation in her eyes, which boded ill to those who fell under her wrath.

"Why did you command me not to mention the Signorita's name when I recovered consciousness a moment ago?" she demanded, as soon as the door was closed. "What means this sudden appearance of the hated Capello? And why are you so suspiciously free from injuries?"

"I will reply to your questions as concisely as possible," Adrian slowly answered.

His manner was such a contrast to that of the Marchesa, that it would seem as though his calmness ought to quiet her wrath; but the difference seemed to have a contrary effect. His measured speech exasperated her, and his calm manner was almost maddening.

"I am free from wounds, because, like yourself and the Signora Maestrelli, I was stunned, and fell at the beginning of the fray. Signor Capello arrived at the palazzo a few moments after the attack, attracted by my calls for aid."

"Calls for aid!" echoed the Marchesa contemptuously. "Did it not enter thy foolish head that even had we been dying, aid would have been more of a calamity than a benefit? Secrecy was our chief aim, and you, by shouting and calling all Foggia to the scene, have doubtless overturned all my well-considered plans. I would that some of thy own potions had been in thy stomach before thou camest hither."

"Softly, Excellenza!" said Adrian of Palermo, a subtle threat underlying the words. "Had I not come hither, your fine plans would all have miscarried."

"Are they in a better condition now, pray?" demanded the Marchesa, her mood carrying her into a wordy warfare even before she knew the full extent of her discomfiture. "Since Bianca has seen this Capello, and knows of his return, it will be impossible to again extort from her a promise to marry Concini. Are you ignorant of that fact, Signor Adrian?"

"It will be impossible for this reason, Excellenza. The Signorita cannot be found."

"Cannot be found? Where is she? Did I not see her flying from the *salon* when the first outlaw appeared at the window?"

"Well?"

"She doubtless ran to her own chamber for safety, and there she may be found at this moment."

"You are mistaken, Marchesa. Before I was struck to the ground I saw the leader of the band seize the Signorita in his arms. I heard him cry, 'Revenge on the Strozzi, and a bride for Gaspard!' and then he leaped from the window and was lost to sight."

"Wretch!" cried the Marchesa, springing upon Adrian like an infuriated tigress. "Why have you not told me this before?"

She raised her hand as if she would strike him, and he, looking her unflinchingly in the eye, only said:

"Which would you prefer, Marchesa, that Gaspard, the bandit, should have your daughter, or Angelo Capello?"

The Marchesa gnashed her teeth.

"Gaspard! by all the powers above, Gaspard! Had it not been for this hated Capello, my work would have been successfully accomplished many months ago."

"So I believed, Excellenza. I too would rather see the Signorita in Gaspard's arms than in Capello's, for I like not the name—it has an ugly sound in my ears also."

Day had fully dawned when Angelo Capello, accompanied by Luigi and various other followers, emerged from the palazzo to seek more congenial accommodations elsewhere.

They had done what they were able to quiet the confusion the bandit's raid had caused, and with the magnanimity of a true nobleman, Capello refused to quit Concini until assured that his wounds would not prove fatal.

Then, having no further excuse for lingering, since the Marchesa had denied him an audience with Bianca, he reluctantly took his leave.

As he passed from Concini's chamber to the grand portal of the palazzo, he kept a watchful eye abroad to detect some signs of the Signorita's presence. He would have been cheered by even a distant glance of the being he loved so well; the rustle of her garments would have been dear to him, and the sound of her voice would have been music in his ears.

True love is strong, and triumphs over every adverse rumor. Though Capello had heard, and might yet believe that Bianca smiled upon a rival, he now believed in her loyalty, and until he should be assured of her fickleness, he would cherish her image as fondly as ever.

With disappointment therefore, not with despair, he was quitting the palazzo, when a hand was laid upon his arm, and turning about he saw an attendant, who proffered him a hastily written billet.

Capello took it with a throbbing heart, for a missive given him in this manner he believed could only have been sent by one person.

Though wishing to be alone, that he might peruse its precious contents undisturbed and unobserved, he was yet too impatient to brook delay.

He tore it open, and daylight seemed to turn to midnight as he read:

"This from Adrian of Palermo, he whom the Marchese di Capello caused to be hunted from Rome like a wild beast a twelvemonth past. To his son greeting: Bianca Strozzi was the prize the banditti sought. They secured it, and thy beloved Signorita is the bride of Gaspard, the outlaw chieftain."

CHAPTER XVI.

GASPARD'S SUCCESS.

Skulking in the shadow of underbrush, and flying before the advance of day, Gaspard and his fierce followers lost no time in quitting the vicinity of the town of Foggia.

Though they had traversed many a weary league during the night, though their work had necessarily been accomplished at daybreak instead of at nightfall, and thus the perils of their situation increased, they

"Stayed not for brake, they stopped not for stone,"

but fled toward the mountains with the speed of unwearied limbs.

Gaspard bore his light burden with the ease of an athlete. As they fled, his comrades offered their aid, and strove to relieve him of his load; but declining such offers, and urging his companions to still greater speed, he kept his place at their head, and neither halted for rest nor panted with fatigue.

Bianca, happily unconscious, was spared for a time the knowledge that every moment and every step bore her further away from home, friends, safety, and perhaps life itself.

Her captors had not traversed a half league, when from the hindermost bandit there came a warning of pursuit.

"We are followed, Gaspard!" the man exclaimed, dashing forward to the leader's side, and directing his attention to the rear of the little procession.

Gaspard looked back, and in the pale morning light saw a number of horsemen issuing from the gates of the town.

The chieftain's keen eye identified them.

"No fear for us," he said, coolly drawing aside into the friendly shadow of a wooded hillock. "Yonder horsemen are the same spent riders who entered the town in advance of us. Our own limbs will serve us better than those of their tired beasts. So let us rest and breathe a space here."

"For Heaven's sake, let us not remain upon the open field like this!" cried a comrade. "We shall be seen, captured, and disposed of as was poor Filippo himself."

"Hold thy tongue, fool!" was the reply. "'Tis not for thee to speak when Gaspard himself has spoken."

As the leader uttered these words he laid his burden down upon the ground, and giving the order to his men, they all threw themselves upon their faces upon the cool grass, and in that position seemed to await the approach of their pursuers.

One or two of the outlaws looked with apprehension upon the advancing horsemen, but Gaspard betrayed no concern whatever, and gradually the reckless company became as confident of safety as their leader.

"See how the beasts stumble," said Gaspard. "Their bruised knees will be a sorry sight for them to show the one who sent them out upon this wild search. The homes of their riders are not hereabouts, else they would know right well that 'tis useless to follow banditti across the Campagna. Were we so minded, we could lead the fools a fine chase across the country."

He half raised himself, with an eager look toward his pursuers.

"Were we not ourselves so jaded, the chase would be one well worth the having."

"But the girl," remonstrated the outlaw who had before spoken.

"'Twould be no greater matter to carry the girl with these fellows at our back than to do so peaceably," retorted Gaspard.

"Come, my brave fellows," he cried, after a second's reflection, seeming to gain his own consent to a wild project. "Let Foggia ring to-day with our exploits. Up, comrades, and sound our rallying cry."

With the order every bandit sprang to his feet, and the cry, "Revenge upon the Strozzi!" rent the air from the lungs of the six outlaws.

The cry was a challenge for pursuit. The horsemen readily espied the banditti, as they stood for an instant on the verge of the plain to insure their being seen.

They waved their high-crowned hats in wild mockery, and then turning about, dashed in a circuitous route toward the mountains.

Each bandit knew the reason why a more direct route had not been chosen, and ere many seconds elapsed the pursuers knew also.

Gaspard, with the senseless Bianca across his shoulders, ran with the long easy leaps of one well used to mountain routes, and his comrades followed closely at his heels.

"They gain upon us, do they not?" the chieftain asked, stopping a moment to look behind and note the progress of the horsemen.

"Aye, Gaspard, they gain upon us most certainly."

Gaspard suddenly faced his pursuers, and for a rod or two ran directly toward them. Then taking another course, he ran more fleetly still.

A shout from the horsemen fell upon his ears. But a moment after it was uttered, the foremost, who was plunging wildly forward but the second before, was lost to view.

A mocking laugh from the banditti announced the success of Gaspard's ruse.

"Look!" he cried, with a victorious shout. "Another and another have followed the first. That pitfall was nobly planned, and they who now lie floundering at the bottom of it will have reason to curse the hands that made it. Ha! ha! brave *guardiani*, how fares it with thee now?"

Only a moment did either party halt to exchange these mocking courtesies. The remaining horsemen, not waiting to extricate their companions from their unpleasant, and, for aught they knew, perilous position, were rather incited to fresh efforts by this disaster, and plunging their spurs into their horses' flanks, they dashed forward more resolutely than before.

"See!" cried he who now led the party. "That foremost wretch, he who is the chief, carries a burden across his shoulder which to my eyes looks much like a living being. Did not Signor Capello ask about a Signorita yonder in the palazzo?"

"Aye, that he did, in truth, and the Signorita he hoped to see is one whom he loves. If that is she whom yonder wretch is bearing away, we cannot do a nobler deed than to rescue her from his clutches."

"Forward, comrades! in Heaven's name, forward!"

The faithful band needed no urging. Their very steeds seemed to comprehend the urgency of the case, for, rallying their nearly spent strength, they dashed forward as bravely as they were able.

Banditti and horsemen did their best. Each disregarded the drawbacks which fatigue imposed, and the pursuit soon assumed the character of a race for life or death.

The half score horsemen had little to apprehend from the six fatigued bandits in a hand to hand fight. The former had the advantage of numbers and position, for with the latter it was a question of even more than life or death, for if they should be overtaken and captured, their unsuccessful hardihood would make them the laughing stock of every outlaw of the Abruzzo, while, worse than that, their memory would be execrated to remote generations.

Gaspard's courage never flagged; it was as untiring as his strength appeared to be, and he cheered his comrades as lustily and as triumphantly as though his pursuers were not gaining upon him with every leap.

It was at this moment that Bianca, aroused perhaps by the excitement around her, began to show signs of consciousness. She opened her eyes feebly, and when her glance fell upon the fierce face that was so near her own, fear sent the warm blood coursing so quickly through her veins that strength returned.

Again she unclosed her eyes, and memory coming to her aid, she readily comprehended the scene which she beheld. She understood in whose malign power she was; understood the purpose of the horsemen who rode so madly in the rear, and more than all, she fully understood the consequences of a fruitless pursuit.

Raising herself therefore, as far as she was able, in the outlaw's arms, she made desperate efforts to free herself from his hold. With difficulty she released her arms from his embrace; she waved them wildly to cheer the pursuers on, and her loud cries resounded over the plain, and were echoed from the mountain sides.

"Quiet those outcries!" shouted Gaspard, placing his hand roughly over her mouth, and stifling both voice and breath with the brutal pressure.

Bianca's white teeth were instantly buried in the bandit's palm. Desperation, and a mortal terror of an unknown evil, made her reckless of the means she took to free herself.

With a terrible oath, Gaspard tore his hand from her mouth, and, smarting with pain, he struck the maiden so cruel a blow, that again she was bereft of consciousness.

"The jade must learn to hold her peace," he said, with a fierce look at his companions. "And if she understands at the same time that the lesson will be quickly and thoroughly taught, it is all the better. To the mountains, comrades! To the mountains!"

By this time the pursuit had become almost maddening. Pitfalls had been passed; sometimes they were seen in time, and at others they entrapped both horse and rider; mountain streams, flowing peacefully across the plain, were waded and crossed; deep gorges in the mountain side were threaded, and at last the parties entered the gloom of the Abruzzo.

Then the chances for capture changed. The banditti were at home, and the horsemen were obliged to proceed more cautiously. The breath of the horses came almost in groans from their distended nostrils and open mouths, but the riders, eager as ever to overtake and capture the outlaws, or at least to rescue the maiden, though they reeled in their saddles with fatigue, still paused not, but pressed bravely on—pressed on until, in the deepening gloom of the mountains, in the dark glens and wooded ravines, they lost sight of the fugitives—until the sound of their feet upon the rocky road, of their exultant shouts of triumph ceased—until the moment when, looking above their heads, they saw the fierce leader peering over at them from an inaccessible height.

"Go back, you hounds!" he cried. "Go back to Foggia to your fine masters, and tell them what you have done, and what you failed to do!"

Still mocking the baffled soldiers with wild shouts and wilder laughter, he drew nearer the verge of the cliff and raised the senseless Bianca in his arms high above his head.

Laughing still, he shouted to those beneath: "Shall I hurl her down upon you to crush some of your tender heads with the light weight? Do you want a mangled body to carry back with you to yonder town?"

Poising himself more firmly upon his rocky pinnacle, he prepared to execute his terrible threat.

A cry of horror, a plea for mercy, a threat of vengeance, came hoarsely up from below.

It was answered by a peal of laughter yet more horrid and diabolical than any that had grated upon the air.

"Fools!" shrieked Gaspard. "Do you think that thus easily I could be avenged upon the Strozzi? What the Marchese has done to the banditti of the Abruzzo will be returned to him in a greater measure than by hurling a silly girl from a mountain peak. Go tell him that Gaspard claims his daughter for a bride. Bid him remember Filippo and his murdered comrades, and then let him gnash his teeth in hopeless fury, and come out against us with all the *sbirri* and *guardiani* at his command."

"Deliver the girl to us!" cried the horsemen from below. "Deliver her, or you shall rue this day's work!"

Only a mocking laugh echoed the words.

"Revenge is sweet!" the bandit cried.

"Revenge is sweet!" was the response that seemed to come from every side, and looking from peak to peak every rock seemed alive with banditti.

A huge boulder crashing down the mountain gorge reminded the horsemen that their position was no longer a safe one to occupy.

Further pursuit was useless; to attempt it would have been madness; for who could scale those seemingly inaccessible heights except those whose lives had been passed in this spot, and who knew, both by instinct and familiarity, every foothold upon every crag in the range?

Reluctantly, therefore, yet with muttered threats of future vengeance, the band turned their horses' heads toward the open plain; and the banditti, exulting in their triumph, turned back from the verge of the cliffs and took their way to their secret camp.

Seemingly the encampment had not changed one iota in appearance since the departure of Gaspard and his men two nights before. Apparently the same men lay around the many fires which the damp mountain air made necessary; the light flickered and danced upon the same fierce faces, it gleamed upon the same motley assemblages, and guided the steps of the same swarthy desperadoes, as from time to time a belated straggler returned to the camp.

A shout of welcome greeted Gaspard and his men as they entered the amphitheatre, bearing in triumph their senseless booty.

"A Strozzi for Filippo!" Gaspard shouted, tossing, rather than placing the unconscious girl upon the ground. "Comrades, I have secured the prize I sought. I have won a bride from the Marchese, but death has robbed me of his blood and of half my revenge."

A groan of hate echoed the mention of the Marchese's name.

"Yes, death was before me," Gaspard repeated, "but this fair Signorita will make amends for that great loss. Here, Caterina, Maddelena, come hither and attend to the lady's wants."

Several women of even a baser and more depraved aspect than the men came forward at this command, and approaching the Signorita, sullenly prepared to obey.

They lifted the girl's head from the ground, and from a dirty flagon poured between her lips a few drops of some fiery liquid, which accomplished its mission much more speedily than a gentler remedy would have done, for before many moments Bianca opened her eyes.

She unclosed them wearily, and immediately the lids fell heavily down upon the aching eyeballs. A sigh of pain and of despair escaped her lips, for in that one glance she had seen enough to assure her that she was still in the power of wretches more infamous than the inhabitants of Hades.

"Come, come, my pretty *figlia*," said Gaspard, kneeling upon the ground beside her, and taking her chin familiarly in the palm of his hand. "Cheer up, *carissima*, and give your lord a joyful welcome home."

The words, the touch, the bearing of the man stung Bianca as no other insult could. She sprang to her feet like an arrow shot from a bow, and concentrating in a look every emotion of scorn, hatred, and contempt, she exclaimed:

"Touch me again at your peril, wretch! Though I am a defenceless woman, I will not submit to your insults. The rocks will befriend me, and I shrink not to cast myself headlong from their heights, to escape your hated touch. Back, I say!" she cried, as Gaspard walked toward her with a scowling countenance. "Back! or you will see me dead at your feet."

"Spare yourself the trouble of using these threats, Signorita," said the chieftain. "Perchance I will myself hurl you into some deep abyss."

"I know you are never so generous," Bianca retorted. "When was a bandit ever known to grant a captive's prayer? When did a bandit ever give a prisoner the choice between death and dishonour?"

Gaspard again changed his mood.

"Tut, tut, *figlia*," he said. "It is not for thy benefit to anger me. Know that I am chief of this wild horde, and at a nod or beck from me, they will spring to do my bidding. Choose thy words more carefully, Signorita, and the power I wield may be shared by thee also. Is it not a pleasant thing to rule, even though it may be over banditti? Thy mother would not despise the offer. Thou too shalt be obeyed, thy slightest wish shall be obeyed, if thou wilt but accept the honor I would confer on thee. Become the bride of Gaspard, the bandit chief of the Abruzzo, and thy word shall become our law. Yonder stands a man who once took holy orders. He will speedily unite us in marriage. So come, *carissima*, let us make yonder mossy bank a woodland altar, where we may speak our marriage vows."

He essayed to take her hand, but Bianca, in whose ears his every word had rung as an added insult, raised her hand with force and dashed his quickly aside.

"Do not touch me, villain!" she cried. "I will not, I cannot bear such contamination. Let me return whence I came. Why have you brought me here, and why am I thus persecuted?"

Womanly fear overcame womanly indignation, and covering her face with her hands, she turned toward the rocky wall against which she stood, and wept aloud.

"Tears, *cara mia*?" Gaspard said, continuing his ill-timed, offensive declarations. "Tears upon the cheeks of Gaspard's bride? The crystal drops shall not fall upon the senseless earth to be wasted and lost. Love's hot kisses shall dry them away, and love's endearments shall forbid them again to start."

She felt the hateful clasp of the bandit's arm about her waist. She felt his hot breath upon her cheek as he bent to kiss her. A wild, heart-rending shriek rang out upon the still mountain air, and breaking away from the restraining embrace, she dashed through the group around her, and with the speed of the hunted antelope rushed toward the secret opening.

But with a hundred human blood-hounds full upon her track, what could the poor girl do? What could she do but fall, but beat herself cruelly against the rocky earth, and again lie at the mercy of her captors, mute, bleeding, senseless?

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—"I am glad," said a missionary to an Indian chief, "that *you* do not drink whiskey; but it grieves me to find that your people use so much of it." "Ah, yes," said the red man, and he fixed an impressive eye upon the preacher, which communicated the reproof before he uttered it, "we Indians *use* a great deal of whiskey, but we do not *make* it."

To boast the good you 've done, ne'er seek;
Let him who did receive it, speak.

—Man passes his life in reasoning on the past, in complaining of the present, and in trembling for the future.

TWO FEET.

Six of us—all school-girls—had gone to have our fortunes told. The gipsy shuffled the old pack of cards three times, and I cut it three times in succession. My first card was the ace of hearts, and I was to have a home, a dear and pleasant home.

"You'll marry well and live happy," said she, "but you'll have trouble first; and there's one that lies between light and dark who has the best of hearts for you, but you don't care for him. Like the sun and the flowers, you have him every day, but you'd miss him if he were gone."

She put away the pack, and then looked in a cup, and muttered to herself, her eyes opening wide, as if they were peering down into the bottom of a deep, deep well.

"I see the flowers come four times," she said at last: "and then there's people all dressed, in a beautiful room. It looks like a wedding. I see the bride with her wreath and vail, but she's not with the rest; she's by herself; and there's the handsomest man you ever saw. He walks back and forth in a place alone. There's music too. But, oh, how dark it grows! and I can't see any more. The lights go out all at once, and the people are all still, and the music stops. But that pale-faced girl that came with you"—and the gipsy whispered, as she looked again in the cup—"she'll only see the grass grow three summers, and she'll never marry. Hers was the ten of hearts, the last card in the last row, and she'll never marry."

The woman leaned her head on her hand as she bent over the cup, and she said, "Poor thing! poor thing!" and shook her head sorrowfully.

"What do you see?" I asked.

"Oh, I see *two feet! two feet!*" she replied; and if she had seen a ghost, or looked up at a scaffold, or down into a grave, she could not have seemed more schocked. I did not want to ask anything more, for, in spite of myself, some of the same strange terror crept over me, and I was sorry I had been such a fool as to come—but the girls put me up to it just for once—to have my fortune told.

School-days were soon over, and we all went back to our homes; and the first face I saw out of the car window, as I reached the depot, was John Wilson's. John Wilson had plain eyes, too gray to be called blue, and yet too much blue about them to be called gray. There wasn't a handsome feature in his face, and nothing striking in his form or manner. I had known him ever since his widowed mother came to live in the big brown house on the corner; and some way—I can't tell how it happened—I was never at a party, promenade, or even a prayer-meeting, but John Wilson was there also, and, most always sure to come home with me. But I never thought of making a hero or lover out of John Wilson. The hero of my dreams and fancies was exceedingly tall, looking down protectingly upon my littleness, with speaking eyes, thrilling voice, and distinguished manner.

I had formed, while at boarding-school, an ardent attachment for Mary Livingston Morris, the young lady whom the gipsy called my white-faced friend, and I had kept up for three years a constant correspondence with her. It was three years since we left school, and she had written me that she had met the best man in the world, and had promised to be his wife on the fourth of the coming May, and I must be bride's-maid. I got my costume ready, and prepared to set out. My travelling dress was steel-colored poplin; my hat, gloves, gaiters and sash were steel-colored. There were blue forget-me-nots in the hat, and a blue ribbon bow for the neck. The fit and trimmings of the dress were perfect. I left home in fine spirits. My health, purse and wardrobe were all in satisfactory condition. As John Wilson shook hands and bade me good-bye—somehow John was always the last to say good-bye—he put a little bunch of forget-me-nots in my hand, and said:

"Take care, Miss Alice, and don't let any of those city fellows steal away your heart."

I was to be at Mary's a week before the wedding, as I was her dearest lady friend, and, like myself, Mary had no sister. I had a pleasant seat on the shady side of the car. Hills, rivers, vales, villas and cottages flitted enchantingly by. All the green in the grass, all the blue in the sky seemed freshly burnished up for this one cloudless morning. My spirits were jubilant. No real grief had ever saddened my girlhood, and these visits to Mary were among the brightest parts of my life. I leaned back to catch one more glimpse of a graceful village spire shining through some distant elms, and I remember nothing more till I opened my eyes, as if half awaking out of sleep, and found myself lying on some boards, and bending over me a man with the finest form and rarest face I had ever seen. His eyes and hair were black as night. He was bandaging up my left arm with what seemed to be a pocket handkerchief. My hat was gone, and my dress was badly torn. I could hear the despairing screams and piercing shrieks of the wounded and the dying. Cars and passengers lay there crushed, swimming in blood.

It was strange how through all I had kept John's forget-me-nots crumpled up in my right hand.

It seemed to me, as I lay in that half unconscious state, as if all the people in the world were dying—all but this tall stranger and myself. He had a slight cut on one side of his forehead. My left temple throbbed with pain, and my left side and arm hurt me intensely as I tried to turn over. I saw amid all this wreck and ruin, just a little in front of me, lying by themselves apart, *two feet, two human feet*, and I fainted. When I opened my eyes the tall stranger was bathing my head, but some one had placed some object, some fragment of broken car or window, between me and those feet. I never saw them more—only as I shall always see them in my dreams, until I die.

Though too weak to stir in the midst of all that wreck and agony, I remember seeing the name "Raphael" on the corner of the handkerchief with which my arm was bandaged. Its owner's seat in the car had been just a little behind, and on the opposite side of mine. By some presence of mind or presence of body he had saved me, after his own most miraculous escape. All those seated near us were numbered among the dead. I shiver and tremble as I try to tell the story, and I never want to read or hear of it more.

I was taken to Mary's house. I was kindly nursed and cared for. Mary was not there. She went out, they said, that morning, they supposed to her cousin's up town, where she went almost every week, and often passed a night. Rested and refreshed, I could see her in the morning.

On my table, in the morning, when I awoke, were flowers. An exquisite bouquet of pansies, heliotropes, rosebuds and japonicas. A tall, dark-haired gentleman, Margaret said, had brought them, and they came every day for that week, fresh flowers.

He had saved my life. He had sent me flowers. And he was the handsomest and most attractive man I had ever seen—my ideal real; of course I couldn't help thinking of him.

Mary did not come back. All search, all inquiry, all advertising, did no good. Nobody had seen her. The bridal day came, and no bride. And robe and wreath and vail and jewels were laid sorrowfully aside, with the faint hope of some event yet solving the sad mystery.

Poor Mrs. Morris walked the floor many a long, long night, haunted by visions of suicide or murder, and sometimes in dreams seeing the fair girl back again.

Raphael came home with me. He came often to see me; and one day, under an old elm-tree near the library window, he told me of his great love, and I promised on the fifteenth of the next June to be his wife.

Two months after the accident, I took up an old paper and my eye fell on an article giving an account of that tragedy still so fresh in my mind, and I read these words:

"One of the saddest sights of the wreck was two feet, by themselves apart, small and delicate, and on the bottom of the sole of each stocking was wrought, in crimson embroidery silk, a little star."

I let the paper fall. It all came to me. The mystery was solved. Mary and I were roommates at school, and the laundress was forever bringing us the wrong stockings from the wash. We each purchased a new box of stockings, and I said, as I took them out of the boxes, I'll fix these so that a wayfaring laundress, though a fool, needn't err therein. So I worked in the bottom of each of Mary's stockings a little crimson star, and in my own I made a star in blue.

Mary had probably found my letter in the post-office, and taken a down train to meet mine coming up, and got on at station G, to surprise me, and accompany me to her home.

We reached station G ten minutes before the accident happened, and she had meant, after the train was well started, to hunt me up through the crowded cars, and slip in slily by my side. But for trying to meet me, she might now have been a happy bride. Raphael comforted me, when I almost reproached myself for being the innocent cause of her death, and I think I loved him with a fervor that never could come from love not born of sorrow.

I sent for John Wilson, and I asked him to go and see Mrs. Morris and tell her about the stockings, that the painful suspense might be over. I thought it best she should know the truth, and not be forever haunting herself with visions of murder and suicide, or tantalized with a vain hope of some time having her lost daughter come back again. I wanted John to go, for some how it always seemed as if there was anything hard to do, John could do it. John went, and Mrs. Morris told me long afterward, with streaming eyes, that he talked to her like an angel. The next week after he saw Mrs. Morris, I opened a magazine and found on its second page a poem entitled, "Two Feet." It was full of pathos and power; there was true poetic fire, and true heart in it too. I cut it out and pasted it in the blank leaf of my Bible. I read it so many times that I knew it all. Oh, how many times I've cried over it!

The one who wrote that, I said, could make himself for ever famous by his poetry; and if there is any gift God-given, any gift I covet and almost worship, it is true poetic genius. I didn't know it then, but I learned long afterward, that John Wilson wrote that poem. Every day I heard of some secret good of his doing, but I never thought him a genius, never.

The fifteenth of June came, my wedding-day. How pleasant the parlor looked that evening. I wished all my friends to see me married, so I would have an old-fashioned evening wedding. There were flowers on the mantel, flowers in vases under the pictures, flowers in niches and recesses, flowers everywhere. I had a passion for flowers, and my own hands had arranged them all, and the room was like a garden. I stood a moment in the door, to admire the effect once more, and I sighed, as I thought they are all cut like so many victims for my pleasure, and they must all wither, I said, as I went up stairs to be robed for my bridal.

Just as the girls put the last touch to my dress, and were about to place the orange wreath on my head, there came a loud rolling, deafening peal of thunder, with such sharp flashes of lightning that, in my terror, my bridal dress seemed all in a blaze.

Flash after flash lit up the little ormolu clock on the mantel, and I could see the hands point at half-past seven. "It is just the hour precisely, girls; do you see?" I said; "but I'll never be married in a thunder-storm."

We had heard the people in the hall and parlor below talking and moving about, waiting for the bride's appearance. We had rehearsed and planned it all, with the ungloving and putting on the ring, but the storm put all this out of our heads, and it had made a great hush in the crowd below; not a sound could we hear of whisper, footfall, or laugh, through open window or door. Another terrible crash came, and we knew that some object near was struck. It was the old elm-tree by the library window, the tree under which Raphael and I had so often sat, and where he had first told me of his love. But it was shivered from trunk to crown, and lay like a prostrate giant.

As the tree was struck, Ann heard a sobbing and moaning outside, as if some one were in great terror and distress. Ann was always brave and fearless, and she went out in the storm and found on the piazza a woman holding a child about four years old in her lap. The child had been struck by lightning, and the woman was sobbing and moaning, "My child is dead! My child is dead!" My father was a physician. Ann called him, and the child was brought into our little library and laid on the sofa. Over the sofa were two pictures, of the same size and framed alike—photographs—Raphael's and mine. They had been taken only a week, and were very lifelike. The lady seemed to see nothing, notice nothing but the child.

The child was not dead. Thanks to my father's skill, it soon revived, opened its eyes, and looked up at the picture of Raphael hanging just over its little head. It stretched out its arms, put up its hands, and cried out earnestly, "Papa! Papa!"

The mother looked up suddenly, and her eyes met the picture—those beautiful eyes of my Raphael's—looking down at her.

"Raphael! Raphael!" she said, and she swooned away.

It took much longer to restore the woman to consciousness than the child. Hers seemed a shock sudden and severe.

The child raised up, and leaning over the unconscious mother, said:

"Wake up, mamma! wake up! See! see! there's papa!"

I heard a well-known step approaching the library door, and I went out to meet him. Another flash of lightning came full upon his face, and the child, who had followed me in terror, clinging to my dress, met the picture's self face to face, and screamed out:

"Papa! papa! come wake up mamma!"

"The child mistakes you for some one she has known," I said, "and the woman too, for she called your name when she saw the picture."

"The woman must be insane," said Raphael, turning pale, and looking exceedingly annoyed. "I will slip away into the parlor, and she will not be disturbed by her insane impressions. I must have my duplicate walking about somewhere. It is not the first time I have been mistaken for somebody else."

I went back, and staid with the woman alone. She seemed distressed for breath, and I unfastened her dress, and there dropped out a little locket, and a note half worn and torn.

I knew the writing too well. The face in the locket was Raphael's. The handwriting of the old note was Raphael's. There were two pictures in the locket. One was the face of the woman on the sofa, pale and motionless; the other Raphael's—*my* Raphael's; and *hers* it seemed—*hers* first! And this was the very hour when, had the storm not come, I should have left my father's house and began my bridal journey—*Raphael's wife!*

There was a slight scar on Raphael's forehead no one but myself had seen. His hair usually fell over it and covered it. And I thought, if this is only some fearful dream after all, and *her* Raphael is not mine, but some one else, this scar may prove it.

As the woman recovered, she said, turning her lustrous eyes full on me:

"Where did you get that picture? Did you buy it? Raphael, my husband, had several taken in Italy and in this country. Five years ago to-night I was married to Raphael," she said, "and they wrote me he was dead—drowned at sea—and I came to this country to find his grave, and then to take my child to her uncle in Virginia, and there die myself. I am so lonely!" she said, and she opened the little locket, which I had taken care to replace in her bosom. "See, this was taken in Italy," she said, "and there is a little scar on his forehead."

And I looked again more carefully at the locket, and I did see the little scar on the forehead.

The woman went on talking in her plaintive way.

"The child, little Louise," she said, "once came near being burned to death, and in saving her life Raphael burned himself, and I wanted the scar to show in the picture, if only just a little."

Just then three loud, successive rings at the door bell startled us both, and I heard a rough voice say:

"You are my prisoner, sir."

Though he persisted in declaring that he was not the person they sought, Raphael was borne away a prisoner for having been implicated in some extensive counterfeiting schemes; so he never made me any explanation.

John Wilson—good, noble fellow—worked hard, and succeeded in getting Raphael free, and himself, wife and child bound for Italy, with the promise that she should never know how Raphael's picture came in my library. Perhaps some strange series of circumstances had made each believe the other dead, until the woman, losing her way, had come to my door that night to be shielded from the storm.

I was ill a long, long time after that; and through all the delirium of fever, these lines in John's poem would haunt my brain:

"On the dark river's radiant shore,
Those beautiful feet we'll see once more;
There, crowned and robed with virgin pride,
We'll find our lost, 'resplendent bride.'"

Another year passed away, and the fifteenth of June came again. I had been out riding, and I came very quietly in through the open hall door and passed into the library, and there, with his back to me, stood John Wilson before my picture. It was very still, and I heard, up from his big manly heart, one great sob, as he said in a low tone:

"Oh, if she could only love me a little!"

Great, noble, wonderful soul! How my heart sobbed back and went out to him, as I stole up behind him and kissed him!

"I do love you, John," I said. "I think I must have loved you always."

And so it happened that I married John; but he never offered himself to me, as the gipsy said. I have a dear and pleasant home, and oh! how I should miss him if he were gone!

Raphael's wife and child were drowned on their way back to Italy; and he enlisted in some foreign war, was wounded, and lived but three weeks after.

THE HELPING HAND.

A LIFE-PICTURE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

The story, with its application, so far as the pointing of a moral is concerned, may be an old one. So are the sunshine and the dew-drop old. So is the human heart old; and the pure impulses and affections of to-day had life in the morning of Eden. Pleasant pictures are always pleasant. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever;" and may I not add, that pure joy, springing from the heart, must be forever beautiful. The simple story I have to tell I give only as a pleasant picture. I knew the parties. One of them is living within the sphere of my knowledge still.

Amos Dutton, at the age of nineteen, left his home in Vermont and came to Boston. His parents were both dead, and he had been left penniless; but by hard work, and close application to every chance which he could grasp, he had managed to gain a good common-school education, besides supporting himself, and helping a twin sister. At length his sister married, and he resolved to seek his fortune in the city. He yearned for a broader and better field of action than was open to him in his far-away home, and having obtained recommendations touching his character and habits from two or three prominent men, he set forth.

Never mind the youth's initiatory struggles. A less resolute will might have failed. Business was dull, and good men were being discharged in nearly all the departments of trade. Finally Amos Dutton entered the warehouse of Andrew Sears, on Milk street, and asked for employment. He was willing to perform any labor, no matter how menial, so that it was honorable, and would not debar him from rising by merit.

Mr. Sears liked the appearance of the youth, and he was willing to accept the recommendations at their face value; but he was not in want of help. He had within a week discharged a number of hands.

Dutton took back his commendatory documents, which had by this time become well worn, and having thanked the merchant for his kindness, he turned to depart.

"That lad has the qualities of a gentleman, at all events," said Mr. Sears, to himself, as the applicant's handsome, pleasant face was turned from him.

The entrance to the counting-house was by a narrow court, and as Dutton was passing out he saw a glittering object upon the pavement. He picked it up, and found it to be a bosom-pin—a fine emerald set in gold. He turned back and re-entered the office, and handed the jewel to Mr. Sears, simply remarking that he had found it in the court, and that the owner would be likely to call there in his quest for it. The merchant took the pin, and said he thought he knew to whom it belonged, and he would see that its proper owner regained it. And without waiting for thanks or praise the youth again departed.

Mr. Sears had seen the young man pick up the valuable jewel, and had particularly noted his movements on the occasion. There had been no hesitation—no casting about of the eyes to see if he was observed,—but the instinct seemed to be with him to do right. And the merchant said to himself,—

"The lad is certainly honest."

And after this the merchant put on his hat to go out.

Amos Dutton, on his way down the court, did not find another jewel; but when he reached the street he found a man in trouble. An old Negro, who had been drawing a heavy bale of merchandise upon a hand-cart, had overturned his load, and his strength was not sufficient to replace it. In vain had he tried to lift the ponderous bale back upon his cart, and in vain was he still striving. Men were passing, but none offered to assist him. Dutton saw, and he hastened to the poor Negro's assistance as he would have hastened to assist a brother.

"Hold on," he cheerily cried. "Let me help you, my friend."

The youth was as strong as he was willing, and very soon the heavy bale was in its place, and with profession of thanks the old African went on his way rejoicing.

Mr. Sears had reached the door of his warehouse just in season to witness this scene, and again he spoke with himself:—

"This youth has a strong hand, and a willing one. The time may come when I shall need such. I will secure it now; and I believe the investment will be a good one."

And he called the youth by name, and beckoned him back.

"My boy," said he, with a kindly smile, "I have changed my mind. I will try you. I told you truly when I told you that I did not at present need more help; but I hope I shall need it ere long. I have witnessed that you are truthful and honest, and I have also witnessed that you have a strong and helping hand, and a willing one. Others might have returned the jewel; but few would have risked the grime and the labor of helping that poor Negro with his street-soiled burden."

And Andrew Sears took Amos Dutton into his employ; and his anticipations were more than realized. Not only did the youth prove himself honest in all things, but his helping hand was ever ready when there was possible need.

Years have passed since that time. Andrew Sears has gone beyond the shadowy vale; but Amos Dutton is living yet, doing good with his vast wealth, and honored and beloved by all who know him.

THE THOUGHTFUL SILENCE OF THE FOREST.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

There is an awful stillness in these trees,
Made naked here by Winter's iron hand
In chartered mastery. A shroud of snow
Spreads without pity on the lengths beneath,
And from the far, calm, cloudless blue o'er all,
The great round Moon, queened by the reverent Stars,
Looks down in earnest meditation, while
The silent wood seems wrapped in solemn thought
Over some dreadful, weird old mystery.

O! it is very terrible. A fear
Of something vast but undefined creeps through
The soul's hushed chamber; and to this, if doomed
Long to endure, death, death itself would be
A prayed for bliss.
O for a little sound,
One single breath to break such silence!
Ha!
There is a stir amid the trees. A Breeze
Moves softly his thin fingers over the boughs,
As if in pity, and his glad, sweet song
Frees the grand Forest, white and still and lone,
From his dread musing.
And now grows the song
Yet louder—Wood and Moon and Stars
Are in one great companionship of joy.
The meaning of that musing may not beam
From Time's revealment, but Eternity
Will know, and all the mystery, then plain,
Must make a blessing of the thoughtful Wood.

◆

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE YOUNG WIFE'S DESOLATION.

It was indeed poor Lally Bird, the wronged young wife, whom her husband mourned as dead, who, crouching in the shelter of the way-side thicket, stared after Neva Wynde and Rufus Black with eyes full of a burning woe and despair.

"He loves her! he loves her!" the poor young creature moaned, in the utter abandonment of her terrible anguish. "He said her answer meant life and death to him! And I am so soon forgotten? Oh, he never loved me—never—never! And he does love her with all his soul—O Heaven!"

She sank back into the deeper shadow of the thicket, moaning and wringing her hands.

Her hat had fallen off, and her face was upturned to the gray evening sky. That face, still childlike in its outlines and in its innocence, yet sharp of feature, wan, thin and haggard, was full of wild beseeching. The great hungry black eyes were upraised to Heaven in agonized appeal.

How terribly alone in all the wide world she was! Alone and friendless, with no roof to shelter her, no food to break a long fast, no money. She was ragged and forlorn, her feet peeping from their frail coverings, her sharpened elbows protruding through her sleeves. And now her last hope had been dashed from her, and it seemed as if nothing remained to her but to die.

The story of her life from the moment in which she had fled from her dingy lodgings at New Brompton, had been one of bitterness and privation.

When she had escaped from her only shelter, half maddened and wholly despairing, with the voices of Craven Black and Mrs. McKellar yet ringing in her ears, her first impulse had been self-destruction. She had sped along the streets until, by a circuitous route, she had gained the river and a jutting pier, but it was daylight, and people were in waiting for the boats, so her dread purpose was checked, and she wandered on, wild of face and half distraught, keeping the river ever in sight, as if the view of its waters soothed her mad despair.

Wandering aimlessly onward, she passed through foul river streets, where the vile of every sort congregated, but no one spoke to her or molested her. The shield of a watchful Providence interposed between her and all harm. Once or twice some ruffian would have accosted and stayed her, but a glance into her white and rigid face and wild unseeing eyes made him shrink back abashed, and she sped on as if pursued, not knowing the dangers she had escaped.

She grew weary of foot, and to the wildness of her anguish succeeded a merciful apathy, which steeped her senses. The night came on; the gas lamps were lighted in the streets; the warehouses and shops were closed; there were fewer women in the streets; and in happy homes in the suburbs, at the north and south and east and west of the great teeming City, wives and daughters were gathered into pleasant homes. But she had no home, no refuge, no shelter. She had—oh, saddest of words, and saddest of meanings—she had nowhere to go!

And so she plodded on, slowly and wearily now. She had traversed miles since leaving her lodgings, and it seemed as if her march, like that of the fabled Wandering Jew, must be eternal.

At last, still wandering without aim, she staggered through the turn-gate and out upon the Waterloo Bridge, in the wake of a party of returning play-goers. No one noticed her, and she passed half-way over the bridge and sank down upon one of the stone benches, while the party she had followed went on and were soon lost to view in the Waterloo Road.

She was alone on the bridge, in the night and darkness. Below her lay the dark river, with the small steamers puffing and glancing through the gloom with their tiny eyes of fire, and lowering their stack-pipes as they passed under the bridge. A few people stood at the landing below. Somerset House, dark and silent, like some gigantic mausoleum, lay to her left. Along the river banks were the great warehouses, long since closed for the night, and in the distance the dome of St. Paul's reared its head, faint and shadowy, among the deeper shadows.

The glancing lights of the river boats, the lamps at the landing and along the shores looked strangely unreal to Lally's dazed eyes. She crouched in a corner of the seat and peered over the parapet and tried to think, but her brain seemed paralyzed. The only thought that came to her was that she was no wife, that Rufus had abandoned and disowned her, and that he was to marry another.

People crossed the bridge in laughing groups as the Strand theatres and concert-halls closed, but no one paid heed to, even if they saw, the slender, crouching figure with its wild, fearing eyes. Sometimes, for many minutes together, Lally was alone upon that portion of the bridge—alone with her desperate soul and her terrible temptation to end her sorrows in one fatal plunge.

She arose in one of these intervals to her feet upon the bench and leaned over the parapet, a prayer upon her lips that Heaven would forgive the deed she meditated. And as she stood poised for the leap into eternity, there came back to her, though years had passed since she heard it, the voice of her mother, as she had once listened to it, denouncing the self-murderer as one who destroys his soul as well as his body. The remembrance of the words, and the thought of her mother, caused her to drop again into the corner of her bench sobbing, and weeping a storm of tears that saved her reason.

The wild outburst of her anguish had been succeeded by a strange dullness and apathy, when a woman—a mere girl—"bonnetless, and her hair flying,"—as the Blacks had read in the paper—came running upon the bridge, with moans upon her lips. Lally was as pure and innocent as a little child, yet she knew at a glance that this poor creature belonged to that class which is often termed "unfortunate,"—as Heaven knows they are indeed, in every sense of the sad word. This girl came up to the very niche where Lally was hidden, and sprang upon the bench. She gave one wild look over her shoulder, at the officer who pursued her, and then, with the name of some man upon her lips, tossed up her arms, and sprang over the parapet—into eternity!

Lally uttered a cry of horror.

"It might have been me!" was her first thought, and trembling and terrified, she looked over at the whirling figure as it struck heavily upon a passing boat.

And in the same instant Lally's handkerchief, upon which her name was marked, and which she had held in her hand, dropped over the parapet upon the body of the woman. That accident it was that changed poor Lally's destiny. For the poor suicide was she of whose death Rufus Black read in the paper of the following morning, and Lally's handkerchief found upon the water beside the dead girl, gave the impression that the suicide was Lally Bird.

The presence of Lally upon the bridge escaped the notice of the officer, who turned and ran along the bridge to the end, and hurried down to the pier, whither the rescued body of the suicide was being carried.

People began to gather upon the bridge, seeming almost to spring up miraculously, and Lally, fearing questioning, or detention as witness of the suicide, arose and went back by the way she had come, up Wellington street, into the Strand. She was sufficiently herself by this time to know that she must seek shelter for the night; but where could she go? What respectable inn would give shelter to one so forlorn of aspect, so utterly alone, as she? She would be driven forth as something disreputable and unclean, should she demand lodgings at such an inn. She had money in her pocket—the share Rufus had given her of the ten pounds his father had sent him—but she might almost as well have been penniless, since her money could not procure her respectable shelter for the night.

There might be some home for friendly wanderers, some asylum for respectable women, where she could pass the dangerous hours of darkness, but she knew of none. Such asylums are generally for reclaimed women, not for those who have never gone astray. The omnibuses were still running, it not being yet midnight, and Lally being too tired to walk further, signalled an empty one and took her seat in it.

A long ride followed over rough pavements, past dingy rows of shops and houses, past small villas in small gardens, looking like toy establishments, and through a more sparsely settled region. Lally, overcome with fatigue, dozed most of the time, and was rudely awakened from her slumbers by the stopping of the omnibus and the rough voice of the driver bidding her alight.

She got out, feeling quite dazed, and saw that the omnibus had stopped at the end of its route, and that the horses were already unhitched and being led into the stable. She crept away, not knowing where to go, not even knowing where she was.

Plodding on wearily, now and then clinging to some way-side fence or wall for a moment's rest, she came out upon a wide, deserted heath, open to whoever might choose to camp upon it. This was Hampstead Heath. She walked out upon the turf for some distance, and lay down in the shelter of a furze patch, thinking she was going to die. The skies were dark above her, and all around her the black gloom brooded, covering her from the sight of any tramps who might be taking their sleep that summer night upon the same broad common.

And here Lally slept the sleep of utter weariness. She awakened at the dawn of the new day, and started up, with a wild look around her.

There were donkeys of diminutive breed grazing around her, a few tramps rising lazily from the ground, and a score of industrious people, men, women, boys and girls, digging up groundsel, chickweed and other green weeds, to sell in the great city for the sustenance of birds.

Lally wonderingly surveyed this species of industry of which she had not previously suspected the existence, and then hastily took her departure, not even tempted to prolong her stay by the offer of some bread and cheese from an old, blackened chimney-sweep, who had evidently also slept upon the heath.

All thoughts of self-destruction had gone from her mind, and the question as to her future course now presented itself. The school with which she had formerly been connected as music teacher was broken up, and among the few people whom she had known there was one only to whom she was tempted to go in her distress. That one was an old, consumptive woman who had been "wardrobe mistress" at the seminary during Lally's stay there—that is, the old woman had mended and darned the garments of the pupils, and had supported herself on her meagre pay. She lived at Notting Hill, the school having been located in that neighborhood, and Lally knew her address. The old woman had been kind to her, and Lally resolved to seek her.

She walked a portion of the distance, and availed herself of the aid of omnibuses when she could. Yet the morning was well on when the girl climbed the rickety stairs to the garret of her old friend, and timidly knocked for admittance.

The old woman was at home, busy with her needle, and gave Lally admittance. More—when she heard her pitiful story—she gave the girl sympathy and the tenderest kindness. She was very near her grave, and very poor, but she offered Lally a share of her home, and the girl gratefully accepted it. Here she ate breakfast. During the day her old friend borrowed a copy of the morning's paper, as was her daily custom, and Lally read in it the account of the suicide on Waterloo Bridge, her name being given—to her utter amazement—as that of the self-murderess.

Having a conviction that Rufus would see the same notice, as indeed he had done, she visited the coroner's office with a yearning to see her young husband as he should bend over the poor mutilated body believing it to be her own, and to relieve his anguish and remorse. But Rufus came not, and the suicide was buried in a pauper's grave.

Lally went back to the garret at Notting Hill, with a strange gloom on her face, and shared the labors of the old seamstress, gradually assuming the entire support of her friend, as the old woman's strength failed. She did all the sewing her friend—who was now wardrobe mistress at a boys' school—had engaged to do, and nursed her with a daughter's tenderness, actually starving herself to nourish her only friend, watching by day and night at her side, denying herself food, clothes, and needed rest, to take care of the one who had befriended her; but with all her care and kindness the old woman faded day by day, and early in September died, invoking with her last breath blessings on Lally's name.

The few sticks of furniture were sold to give the old woman a decent burial. Lally was out of money—out of everything. The superintendent of the boys' school refused to allow her to continue the duties she had performed in the old woman's name, alleging that she was too young. And as a last blow, she was turned out of her lodgings because of her inability to pay the rent.

At this crisis of her history, when as it seemed only death presented an open door to her, she resolved to go down to Wyndham and look once more on her husband's face.

To think, with our desperate Lally, was to act. She set out to walk to Wyndham, working in the hop-fields for sustenance as she went. Thus she did three full days of work before she arrived near her destination, and she had crept into the way-side thicket to rest before continuing her journey to Wyndham, when she chanced to overhear the conversation between Neva Wynde and Rufus Black.

Her despair, as she listened to the words of her young husband in declaring his love for Neva, may be imagined. She did not dream how bitterly he had mourned for his lost young wife; she did not dream that she was dearer to him still than Neva could ever be. How could she tell, when listening to his passionate vows of love to Miss Wynde, that the young wife who had slept in his bosom was in his thoughts by day and by night, and was regarded by him as a holy, precious memory?

"It's all over!" she sobbed, pressing her face down upon the dewy turf. "I am forgotten—but why should I not be? I never was his wife. He said so himself in his letter to me that I carry still next my heart. Not his wife—but *she* will be! How beautiful she is! How lovely her face was, how clear her voice. She would pity me if she knew, but she is an heiress, I dare say, while I am only the poor outcast Rufus has made me! Oh, Rufus, Rufus!"

She wailed aloud, but she had learned to bear her griefs in silence, and presently she struggled to her feet and walked in the direction in which the heiress and her lover had gone—the same way by which Lally had recently come.

There was no need for her to go to Wyndham now. Her presence there, or her appearance to Rufus, might embarrass his relations to his newer love, and possibly interfere with his marriage. He thought her dead, and had not even come forward to claim the body he supposed to be hers. Ah, yes, she had never been his wife, and she was forgotten. She would never cross his path again.

She staggered wearily along the road, in and out of the beaten foot-path, with the twilight deepening around her, and with a deeper twilight settling down upon her heart and brain. She passed the Hawkhurst park, the picturesque stone lodge guarding the great bronze gates, and here she paused.

The lodge was closed, and a faint light streamed out through the dotted white curtains. Lally crept close to the great gates formed of bronze spears tipped with gilt, like the gates of the Tuileries gardens at Paris, and pressing her face against the cool rods, looked up the avenue.

At the distance of half a mile or more, the great gray stone mansion sat throned upon a broad ridge of land, and lights flared from the wide uncurtained windows far upon the terrace, and the glass dome of flowers was all alight, and the stately old house looked to the homeless wanderer down by the gates like Paradise.

Her eager eyes searched the terrace, and then, inch by inch, the great tree-arched avenue.

Midway up the avenue, walking slowly as lovers walk, she saw her young husband and Neva Wynde. With great jealous eyes she watched their progress through the shadows, and when they paused in the stream of light upon the terrace, and Rufus Black bent low toward the heiress, a great flame leaped into poor Lally's sombre eyes, and she caught her breath sharply.

The heiress and her suitor stood for some moments upon the terrace, unconscious of the eyes upon them. Rufus declined to go into the house that evening, alleging his agitation as an excuse. Neva took her small parcel which he had carried, and he seized her hand, uttering passionate words of love, and begging her to look favorably upon his suit. Then, not waiting for an answer, he pressed her hand to his lips, and dashed down the avenue toward the gates, while Neva entered the house.

And all this the jealous, disowned wife saw, with her face growing death-like, and the flame burning yet more brightly in her sombre eyes.

"She has accepted him," she muttered. "She will not take the week to consider his suit. They are betrothed. I was sure she lived here. Perhaps she owns the place, and he will be its master. They will both be rich and happy and beloved, while I— Ah, how swiftly he comes! He walked like that the night *I* accepted him. But I am not his wife; I never was, even when I thought myself so. He must not see me. No shadow from the past must darken his happy life—his and hers. It is all over—all over—and I shall never see his face again!"

With one last, long, lingering look, and a sob that came from her very soul, she turned and sped down the road like a mad creature—away from Wyndham, and Rufus, and all her hopes—going, ah, where?

And Rufus, with his new love-dream glowing in his soul, came out of the Hawkhurst grounds, and hurried toward his inn, never dreaming how near he had been to his lost wife, nor how surely he had lost her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE OF NEVA'S LOVERS DISPOSED OF.

Upon his return to the Wyndham inn, Rufus Black found his father awaiting him in their private parlor. The elder Black arched his brows inquiringly as his son came in, and Rufus bowed to him gayly, as he said:

"Well, father, you ought to be pleased with me now. I have offered myself to Miss Wynde."

Craven Black started.

"She has accepted you?" he demanded.

"Not yet. She wants to think the matter over, and I have consented to let the thing rest where it is for a week. I take it as a good sign that she did not refuse me at once. Her hesitation implies a regard for me—"

"Or a sense of duty toward some one else," muttered Craven Black. "Curse that letter. If I had seen the girl, I would never have written it."

"What is it you say, father? I did not catch your words?"

"They were not meant for your ears. So, Miss Wynde demands a week in which to consider your offer? It would be proper for you to refrain from going to Hawkhurst to-morrow. I'll explain to her that you remained away from motives of delicacy."

"Which I shall not do," said Rufus doggedly. "I shall go to Hawkhurst to-morrow evening. I will not leave the field clear to Lord Towyn. He's an earl, rich, handsome, and intellectual, the very man to capture a girl's heart, and if I know myself, I am not going to give him a clear field. Why, he loves her better than I do even, and I can only come out ahead of him by dint of sheer persistency. It's a mystery to me how she refrained from saying No to me, when she can have Lord Towyn if she chooses. There is something behind her hesitation—some hidden cause—"

"Which you will do well to let alone," interposed his father. "'Take the goods the gods provide' without questioning."

Rufus was not satisfied, but concluded to act upon this advice.

The next morning Craven Black attired himself with unusual care, and mounted his piebald horse, a new purchase, and set out alone, at a slow canter, for Hawkhurst. He knew that the heiress usually took a morning ride, attended only by her groom, and he knew in what direction these rides usually lay. It was impossible for him to demand a private interview with her at her home without exciting the suspicions and jealousy of Lady Wynde, and he was determined to see the heiress alone, and discover in what estimation she held him. He was also determined not to accept quietly the four thousand a year of the Baronet's widow until he knew, beyond all peradventure, that he could not obtain the seventy thousand per annum of the Baronet's daughter.

He rode up to Hawkhurst lodge, slackening his speed, but not pausing. As it happened, a little boy, a son of the lodge keeper's, was playing in the road, and Craven Black tossed him a sixpence, and demanded if Miss Wynde were out riding, and which way she had gone.

"Dingle Farm way," said the urchin, scrambling in the dust for the shining coin. "She been gone a long time."

"Who is with her?" asked Craven Black.

"Jim, the groom—that be all."

Black put spurs to his horse and dashed on. He knew where the Dingle Farm was, it having been pointed out to him by Lady Wynde, as a portion of the Hawkhurst property. The ride was a favorite one with Neva, being unusually diversified. The road led through the Dingle wood, across a common, and skirted a chalk-pit of unusual size and depth.

Craven Black turned off from the main road into a narrower one that led across the country, and pursued this course until he entered into the cool shadows of the Dingle wood. Still riding briskly, he came out a little later upon the Dingle common, a square mile of unfenced heath, covered with furze bushes. At the further edge of the common was the chalk-pit, now disused. The road ran dangerously near to the precipitous side of the pit, and there was no railing or fence to serve as a safeguard. Beyond the chalk-pit lay the Dingle Farm, a cozy, red brick farm-house, embowered with trees.

The morning was clear and bright, and the sun was shining. As Craven Black emerged from the shadow of the wood he swept a keen glance over the level common, and beheld, a mile or more away, beyond the chalk-pit, but approaching it, the figure of Miss Wynde.

She was superbly mounted upon a thorough-bred horse, and was followed at a little distance by her groom.

Even at that distance, Craven Black noticed how well Neva sat her horse; how erectly she carried her lithe, light figure; how proudly the little head was poised upon her shoulders. She was coming on toward him at a sweeping gait, her long green robe fluttering in the swift breeze she made.

"She will be a wife to be proud of," thought Craven Black, with a strange stirring at his heart. "How fearless she is. One would think she would pass the chalk-pit at a walk, but it is evident she does not intend to."

He dashed on to meet her. Neva saw him coming, recognized him, and the close grasp upon her bridle rein relaxed, and the fierce gallop subsided into a quiet canter.

She was past the chalk-pit when he came up to her, and she bowed to him coldly, but courteously.

"Good-morning, Miss Wynde," said Mr. Black. "You were having a mad ride here. I fairly shuddered when I saw you coming. A single sheer on the part of your horse would have sent you over the precipice."

"Oh, Badjour and I understand each other," said Neva lightly, patting the horse's proudly arched neck. "I never ride a horse, Mr. Black, if I have not confidence in my ability to control him."

"But the road is so narrow and dangerous at this point," said Craven Black, wheeling, and riding slowly at her side.

"You are right, Mr. Black. The road must be fenced in. I will speak to Lord Towyn about it."

"And why not to Sir John Freise or Mr. Atkins, who are equally your guardians?" asked Craven Black, with an attempt at playfulness.

"Because I presume I shall see Lord Towyn first," replied Neva gravely. "What do you say to a race, Mr. Black? I see that you are returning with me."

Craven Black looked over his shoulder. The discreet groom had fallen behind out of ear-shot. Now was the time to make his declaration of love. Such an opportunity might not again occur.

"The truth is, Miss Wynde," he exclaimed, "I came out to meet you. I want to have a quiet talk with you, if you will hear me."

Neva bowed her head gravely, and her reins fell loosely in her gauntleted hand. They were out upon the wide common now, the Dingle Farm behind them, the Dingle wood ahead.

"You may guess the nature of the communication I have to make to you, Miss Wynde," said her elderly lover, with an appearance of agitation, a portion of which was genuine. "That which I have to say would be more fittingly said in some other position perhaps. I should prefer to say it on my knees to you, as the knights made love in olden times."

"Oh!" said Neva. "Hadn't we better move on faster, Mr. Black?"

"Coquettish like all of your sex!" said Craven Black, drawing nearer to her. "You understand my meaning, Neva? You know that I love you—I who never loved before—"

"Surely," cried Neva, with an arch sparkle in her red-brown eyes, "you did not perjure yourself when you married the mother of your son?"

Craven Black bit his lips fiercely, but said smilingly:

"That marriage was one of convenience. No love entered into it, on my side, at least. I never loved till I met you, fair Neva. You have younger suitors, but not one among them all who will be to you what I would be—your slave, your minister, your subject."

"And I should want my husband to be my king," murmured Neva softly. "And I would be his queen."

"That arrangement would suit me perfectly," declared Craven Black, feeling a little awkward at his love-making, not altogether sure Neva was not secretly laughing at him, yet eagerly catching at the assistance her words afforded him. "I would be your king, Miss Neva—"

He paused in anger, as the girl's light laugh made music in his ears that he by no means appreciated. His anger deepened, as Neva looked at him with a bright sauciness, a piquant witchery of eyes and mouth.

"You are very kind," the girl laughed, "but I do not think—pardon me, Mr. Black—that you are of the stuff of which kings of the kind I meant are made?"

Craven Black's fair face flushed. He tugged at his light beard with nervous fingers. An angry light glowered in his light eyes.

"I may not know the full meaning of your words, Miss Neva," he said, forcing himself to speak calmly. "A romantic young girl like you is sure to have many fancies which time will prune. A young girl's fancy is like the overflowing of some graceful rose-tree. When time shall have picked off a bud here, a leaf there, or a half-blown rose elsewhere, the remainder of the blossoming will be more perfect. I am no knight of romance, but I am not aware that there is anything ridiculous in my face or figure. Ladies of the world have smiled graciously upon me, and more than one peeress would have taken my name had I but asked her. My heart is fresh and young, full of romantic visions like yours. My love is honest, and a king could offer no better. Miss Wynde, I ask you to be my wife!"

Neva's face was grave now, but the sparkle was still in her eyes, as she said:

"I am sure I beg your pardon, Mr. Black, but I thought you were a suitor of Mrs. Artress. I never had an idea that your visits were directed to me. I am deeply grateful for the honor you have done me—I suppose that is the proper remark to make under the circumstances; the ladies in novels always say it—but I must decline it."

"And why, if I may be allowed to ask?" demanded Craven Black, his face deepening in hue nearly to purple. "Why this insulting refusal of an honest offer of marriage, Miss Wynde?"

Neva regarded her angry suitor with cool gravity.

"I beg your pardon if the manner of my refusal seemed insulting," she said gently, "but the idea seems so singular—so preposterous! At the risk of offending you again, Mr. Black, I must suggest that a union with Mrs. Artress would be more suitable. I am only a girl, and young still, as you know, and it is proper that youth should mate with youth."

"You prefer my son then?"

"To you? I do."

"And you will marry him?"

The lovely face shadowed, but Neva answered quietly:

"Mr. Rufus has asked me that question, sir, and I prefer to have him receive his answer from my lips. Whatever my feelings toward him, I have no indecision in regard to you."

"And you actually and decidedly refuse me?"

"Actually and decidedly, Mr. Black."

"Is there no hope that you may change your mind, Miss Wynde? Will no devotion upon my part affect your resolution?"

"None whatever. I cannot even give your proposal serious consideration, Mr. Black. I am willing to regard you as a friend. As a lover, pardon me, you would be intolerable to me."

Neva spoke with an honest frankness that increased Craven Black's anger. He saw that he had no chance of winning her love or her fortune, and it behooved him not to lose the lesser fortune and lesser charms of her step-mother. He tried to take his failure philosophically, but in refusing his love, Neva had made him her bitter and unscrupulous enemy.

"I accept my defeat, Miss Wynde," he said bitterly, "and resign all my pretensions to your hand. Pardon my folly, and forget it. I hope my son will meet with better success in his suit. And may I ask as a favor that you will keep my proposal secret, not even telling it to your step-mother?"

"I am not in the habit of boasting of such things, even to Lady Wynde," said Neva coldly. "Your proposal, Mr. Black, is already forgotten."

They were in Dingle wood now, and the heiress struck her horse sharply and dashed away at a canter. Craven Black kept pace with her, and at a discreet distance behind followed the liveried groom.

Neither spoke again until they were out of the wood, and had traversed the cross-road and gained the highway. When the gray towers of Hawkhurst loomed up in full view, their speed slackened, and Craven Black said hastily:

"One word, Miss Wynde. I have your solemn promise, have I not, that you will never betray the fact that I have proposed marriage to you?"

Neva bowed haughtily.

"Since you have not confidence in my delicacy," she said, "I will give the promise."

Craven Black's face flushed with something of triumph. He was still smarting with his anger and disappointment, still secretly foaming with a bitter rage, but he desired to show Neva that he was not at all crushed or humiliated.

"Thank you," he said. "I shall rely upon that promise. The truth is, Miss Neva, a betrayal of my secret would cause me serious trouble. Ladies never pardon even a slight and temporary disaffection like mine. I am engaged to be married, and my promised bride is the most exacting of women. She would rage if she knew that I had looked with love upon one so many years her junior."

"Indeed! You will marry Artress then?"

"Artress?" ejaculated Black, in well-counterfeited amazement. "What, marry the companion when I can have the mistress? No, indeed, Miss Neva. I am engaged to Lady Wynde?"

"To Lady Wynde—to my father's widow?"

Black bowed assent.

Neva was astounded. She had been too busy with her friends since her return to Hawkhurst to detect the real object of Craven Black's visits, and both Lady Wynde and Black had conspired to hoodwink her. She had never contemplated the possibility of Lady Wynde marrying for the third time. The idea almost seemed sacrilegious. Her father had seemed to her so grand and noble, so above other men, that she had not deemed it possible for a woman who had once been honored with his love to marry another.

"It is like Marie Louise, who married her chamberlain after having been the wife of Napoleon," she thought. "It is incredible. I refuse to believe it!"

Her incredulity betrayed itself in her face.

"You don't believe it?" said Black, with a mocking smile. "It is true, I assure you. Lady Wynde and I became engaged before your return from school. We are to be married next month. Her trousseau is secretly preparing in London."

His manner convinced Neva that he spoke the truth.

"And so," she said, her lip curling, "when your wedding-day is so near, and the woman you have won is making ready for your marriage, you amuse yourself in talking love to me! And that is your idea of honor, Mr. Black? You are well named. Craven by name, and Craven by nature!"

She inclined her head haughtily and dashed on. *Black, choking with rage, hurried in close pursuit. The lodge gates swung open at* their approach, and they galloped up the avenue. Lady Wynde came out upon the terrace to meet them. Neva dismounted at the carriage porch, the terrace being only upon one side of the mansion, and with a haughty little bow to Lady Wynde passed into the house.

Black dismounted and gave his horse in charge of the stable lad who had taken in hand the horse of Neva, and then walked toward the open drawing-room window with his betrothed wife.

"What is the matter between you and Neva, Craven?" asked Lady Wynde jealously. "You look as black as a thundercloud, and she looked like an insulted queen. What have you been saying to her?"

"I thought it time to divulge our secret to her, my darling," said Black hypocritically. "Our wedding-day is so near that I deemed it best to inform her. I met her out riding, and seized upon the occasion to declare the truth."

"And what did she say?"

She fairly withered me with her scorn; recommended me to marry Matilda Artress; and seemed to regard my marriage with her father's widow as a species of sacrilege. I hate her!" he hissed between his clenched teeth.

Lady Wynde smiled, well-pleased.

"And so do I," she acknowledged frankly. "But it is for our interest to counterfeit friendship for her. Be patient, Craven. Some day you and I may bring down her haughty pride to the dust."

"Suppose she refuses Rufus?"

"You and I will soon be married, Craven, and in our union is strength. Tell Rufus to write to Neva, delaying her answer to his suit for a month. By that time we shall be married. If she refuses then to accept your son as her husband, we can contrive some way to compel her obedience. I am her step-mother and guardian, and have authority which I shall use if I am pushed to the wall. I promise you, Craven, that we shall secure our ten thousand a year out of Neva's fortune, and that we shall compel the girl to marry your son. Leave it all to me. Only wait and see!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

◆

A SUCCESSFUL CONUNDRUM.

"John has never given you a ring?" said Katie's sister to her one day. John was Katie's lover.

"Never," said Katie, with a regretful shake of the head.

"And he never will until you ask him for it," pursued the sister.

"Then I fear I shall never get one."

"Of course you never will. John is too stupid to think of such things; and as you could never pluck up the courage to ask for it, it follows that you will never get it."

This set Katie to thinking, and to what purpose we shall see.

That evening her lover called to see her. He was very proud and very happy, for the beautiful girl by his side had been for several weeks pledged to marry with him as soon as the business could be properly done; and John was a grand good fellow, too, notwithstanding his obliviousness of certain polite matters.

"John," said Katie, at length, looking up with an innocent smile, "do you know what a conundrum is?"

"Why,—it's a kind of puzzle—a riddle," answered John.

"Do you think you could ask me one that I couldn't guess?"

"I don't know. I never thought of such things. Could you ask me one?"

"I could try."

"Well,—try, Katie."

"Then answer this: Why is the letter D like a gold ring?"

John puzzled his brain over the problem for a long time, but was finally forced to give it up.

"I don't know, Katie. Why is it?"

"Because," replied the maiden, with a very soft flush creeping up to her temples, "*We* cannot be *Wed* without it."

In less than a week from that date Katie had her engagement ring. C.

STORM-BOUND.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

For days and days the howling blast,
  About the farm-house, quaint and old,
Heaped the white drifts, and swiftly massed
  With snow the landscape, fold on fold.
We heard it sound its clarion calls
  From crag to crag, and then, with long,
Hoarse trumpet-notes, the mountain walls
  And glens and gorges sweep along.

And yet our time ne'er heavy hung,
  As round the hearthstone, warm and bright,
We gathered close, and laughed and sung,
  And stories told, the day and night.
How Maud, a merry girl, would sing
  A fine old ballad, soft and sweet;
While Tom, her lover, rushed to bring
  A cushion for her dainty feet.

Then 'round the grandsire, gray with age,
  With eager ears, the party drew,
And listened to some thrilling page
  Of his own life—historic too—
When he had fought the Britishers,
  And given the red-skins blow for blow;
And wild life with the pioneers,
  Whose axes laid the forests low.

Reading aloud, then music, then
  News from the storm from some young elf
Who, to behold the snow again,
  Had clambered to the window shelf.
And then, perhaps—a luxury rare—
  A legend from our poet youth,
Full of bold knights and ladies fair,
  And almost everything but truth.

And love was made, and friendships formed,
  And warmth was given to head and heart;
And when at last no more it stormed,
  And the hour drew near when we must part,
The floundering snow we boldly met,
  For from that farm-house, quaint and old,
We took sweet memories—sweeter yet
  Than any tale there sung or told.

VERY AMUSING.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

My grandaunt Bergen was a very old lady, with a dusky sort of skin, so mysteriously wrinkled that it was hard to believe that she had not been born so. She wore what hair-dressers call a frizette, and large caps with much frilling, fluting, and other specimens of needle and laundry work upon them. She had a very small life annuity, and lived in a small house of ancient architecture, in which the front door opened into the front parlor, and the bed-room stairs ascended from the dining-room; and with her lived a sort of prodigal son-in-law, who was supposed to have been "very kind to poor Maria," a daughter who had departed this life some forty years before.

He was, at present, a mysterious, sleepy old person, who took a great deal of snuff and shuffled about in slippers. He had a high opinion of the old lady, and frequently remarked that she was "a smart woman." He had never set up for smart himself, and, as far as we know, had never yet done anything for his own support. Whatever the old lady had to leave, was left to him. It could not have been much.

There was nothing in the house which could have been stolen but six silver teaspoons and a dented silver tea-pot, as old as Aunt Bergen herself, but the old lady was continually haunted by the fear of burglars, and fully convinced in her own mind that the fiercest of them were forever watching the door. Peter, the son-in-law, was her only protection, consequently we were not surprised one morning to receive the following missive:

"DEAR FRIENDS: Peter has gone away for a few days, leaving only Brien, who makes the fires and does odd jobs, and little Patty, in the house with me. Send me one of the boys to take care of me. Send Jack; you are always saying that he is so amusing. I like to be amused. Send him immediately, for I would not sleep alone in the house for a kingdom. I don't regard a servant as any protection. He may be connected with burglars.
"Yours truly, A. S. BERGEN.

"P. S.—A desperate looking person is waiting outside; I presume to break in in the night.
"A. S. B."

"Do go, Jack," said my mother.

"Yes, do go, Jack," said my sisters.

"Of course you'll go, Jack," said my father. "To protect the ladies is one of our privileges."

"I can't say that I think she needs any protection," said I. "A burglar has only to take a peep into the hall door to feel sure that there is nothing there to steal, and I hardly think that the most romantic of them will try to carry Aunt Bergen off, after one glimpse of her awful ruffled night-cap."

"We must all grow old," said my mother.

"And my father used to say she was quite a pretty girl," said my father.

"Go, Jack!" cried my sisters, in chorus, "and do be amusing."

I have always had the reputation of being amusing. I am called "the life of the family." In a large household the different members generally take different *roles*.

There is the juvenile man in love with a young lady.

There is genteel comedy in the person of the young lady who will flirt with everybody, and is always having such a delightful time; and there is often the heavy villain in the person of some black sheep of an uncle, who has persuaded his confiding brother-in-law to endorse a note for him.

I am the low comedian of the family, so to speak. I fill the salt-cellar with sugar, and fill the sugar-basin with salt. I hide my sister's chignon when I know she expects a gentleman caller, and play April-fool tricks as regularly as the first day of the month alluded to comes about.

But I am best, perhaps, at disguises, and have called upon my relatives attired as a cook in search of a place, as a female colporteur, and as a beggar. As for preparing a pocket handkerchief after the manner of gun cotton, and giving it to a servant to iron, in which process it of course vanished, I don't boast of that, because it is not original. Some celebrated scientific person did it before me; and besides, successful as it was, the trick threw Bridget into fits, and brought me in for a bill of twenty-five dollars. The ungrateful creature left, of course, as soon as she was able, declining to remain where "the devil got into the pocket handkerchiefs."

This long preamble is to explain why I was desired to be amusing during my visit to Grandaunt Bergen, and may be some excuse for the fact that I endeavored to be so. To be brief, I acceded to the request, and taking my banjo with me, proceeded to Aunt Bergen's house. The old lady opened the door for me herself.

"Come in," she said. "I'm so glad to see you! Brien isn't a bit of comfort to me. Do you see that awful man under the lamp post? He's watching the door."

I looked over my shoulder, and saw a very tipsy old creature supporting himself against the post in question, but said nothing, knowing that argument would be useless.

"I have a watchman's rattle and a large bell," said Aunt Bergen, "and I keep them up in my own room at night, and on the table beside me all day; and there's an alarm on the front door, and bars on all the shutters, but I don't feel safe. I feel better now you are here. Come in, my child, and have tea. Oh, I suppose you brought a revolver?"

"Two, and a bowie-knife," I am sorry to say I answered. "I won't show them to you, because they are alarming to ladies, but they are all up my back."

"Oh!" said Aunt Bergen. "And what's *that* fiddle for?"

"It's a banjo, to amuse you, aunt," said I.

"Ah," said Aunt Bergen doubtfully. "Well, I used to like music. I had a beau once who sang 'Cruel Barbara Allen' most beautifully. Your Granduncle Bergen cut him out though. He, he, he!"

After tea—which was that weak beverage beloved by elderly ladies—I sang to Aunt Bergen, but she did not appreciate the banjo. She called the comic songs low, and I knew no others. I punned, and she did not guess what I was doing. I offered her conundrums, and she went to sleep during their propounding. Finally, on retiring to bed, she stopped at the door, and emphasizing her remark with nods of her high-capped head, uttered this candid observation:

"They told me you were very amusing. I must say *I* don't find you vastly so," and vanished.

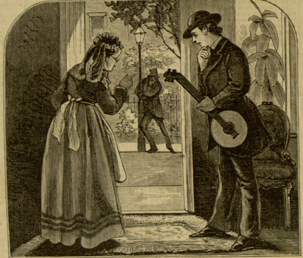
Aunt Bergen was eighty years old. Her finer senses of course may have been blunted, but that is what she said.

Now a fellow who has made a reputation of any kind doesn't want to lose it. I resolved that I would show her that I could be amusing, before we parted.

At breakfast I did my best, with no result. At dinner I was jocose beyond expression. She did not see it. At tea time I was missing. I was, in fact, in the attic, where I had found a quantity of curled hair, once the contents of an old cushion. Of this I had made a beard and wig. An ancient hat and coat, probably the absent Peter's, completed my disguise. I tucked up my trowsers, and hunched my back with more curled hair. Then making a bag of an old pillow ticking, I stealthily descended into the hall, and presenting myself at the door of the dining-room, where Aunt Bergen sat at her solitary tea, cried:

"Old goats for sale? Any old goats?" in my choicest broken German.

On the instant Aunt Bergen turned her head, seized the bell and began to ring it, sprung the rattle, and shrieked at the top of her shrill voice:



"Burglars! Help! Murder! Thieves! Burglars! Help!"

"It is only an old glothes man, ma'am," I cried, advancing.

"Go away! Murder! Thieves!" screamed Aunt Bergen. And in rushed Dennis the man, Patty the maid, and a cousin of Patty's who had been paying his devoirs in the front area.

They seized upon me. I am not large. The cousin was. So was Dennis. They held me as in a vice.

"Let me go!" cried I. "It's all a joke. I'm no old clothes man."

"I knew it. He's a burglar!" cried Aunt Bergen.

"I'm your nephew, aunt!" I yelled.

"*Me* related to *that!*" shrieked my aunt. "Take him away, Dennis."

"I will that," said Dennis. And the two men, still pinioning my hands behind me, propelled me downward. We were met by a policeman, who commenced by throttling me, and ended by tearing off my self-manufactured wig.

"Oh, in disguise!" he cried. "An't you ashamed of yourself? Tried to murder the old lady, didn't he?"

"Yes," screamed the old lady herself, from the end of the hall.

"Aunt, it's me. Come here, for Heaven's sake," I cried. "It's one of my jokes."

The old lady shut her eyes and screamed again.

"Did he shoot, or try to stab her?" asked the policeman.

"He shooted her," cried Dennis.

"He knifed her," cried the cousin.

"He did the both iv 'em," cried Patty.

Upon which circumstantial evidence I was hauled away, and clubbed unmercifully whenever I endeavored to explain.

A night in a cold station-house without any bed, a breakfastless dawn, an appearance before the magistrate in that disreputable old coat, I will pass over as quickly as possible. The strenuous efforts of my family at last brought Aunt Bergen to court in a coach, and she admitted that I was not a burglar.

"The family call him amusing," she added; "but if *that's* what they mean by it, I pity 'em. I consider him crazy. I'd rather have an ape about the house. Going around frightening old women!"

With which words she retired, leaving me to a long lecture from the authority in the desk, and a final dismissal, to read the account in the papers next morning, of the very amusing young man, whose name and number were given in full, and who was supposed, after all, to have had an eye to his aunt's portable property.

Old Maids.

I love an old maid—I do not speak of an individual, but of the species—I use the singular number, as speaking of a singularity in humanity. An old maid is not merely an antiquary, she is an antiquity; not merely a record of the past, but the very past itself; she has escaped a great change, and sympathizes not in the ordinary mutations of mortality. She inhabits a little eternity of her own. She is miss from the beginning of the chapter to the end. I do not like to hear her called mistress, as is sometimes the practice, for that looks and sounds like the resignation of despair, a voluntary extinction of hope. I do not know whether marriages are made in heaven; some people say that they are; but I am almost sure that old maids are. There is a something about them which is not of the earth earthy. They are spectators of the world, not adventurers and ramblers; perhaps guardians; we say nothing of tattlers. They are evidently predestinated to be what they are. They owe not the singularity of their condition to any lack of beauty, wisdom, wit, or good temper; there is no accounting for it but on the principle of fatality. I have known many old maids, and of them all, not one that has not possessed as many good and amiable qualities as ninety and nine out of a hundred of my married acquaintance. Why then are they single?

A MODEL COMPLIMENT TO A LADY.—There scarcely ever was a finer compliment paid to a lady than that which was addressed by Dean Swift to a wife who was constantly praising her husband:

You always are making a god of your spouse,
But that neither reason nor conscience allows;
Perhaps you may think 'tis in gratitude due,
And you adore him because he adores you.
Your argument's weak, and so you will find,
For you, by this rule, must adore all mankind.

MONEY.—Make an impartial estimate of your revenue; and whatever it is, live upon less. Do this, and you will never be poor.

FIFTEEN O'CLOCK.

We remember a good story which we once heard Dr. Charles Jewett tell in one of his temperance addresses. At all events, it was good as he told it.

Lumpins and Boozle were on their way home one night from a convivial party, and as the toasts which they had drank had been numerous, and as the beverage on the occasion had been somewhat stronger than Dr. Johnson's tea, their heads were not in a very perpendicular condition. In fact, their course was an extremely zigzag and uncertain one. As they staggered onward the bell of a neighboring church started to peal the hour of midnight.

Lumpins stopped and caught hold of a lamp-post.

"Hole on, ole feller," he said, to his companion, "le's see what (*hic*) time 'tis."

Boozle also embraced the lamp-post, and they both counted the strokes of the deep-toned bell.

"*One,—two,—three—*"

At this point the clock of another church, just down a diverging street, slightly behind the time of its neighbor, commenced to strike; and so nearly did its notes harmonize and time in with the other, that the obfuscated senses of our two adventurers did not catch the double strokes.

They counted on, loudly and in unison,—"*eleven,—twelve,*"—and without break of time or rhythm the belated clock kept on to finish its work, and the convivial knights kept on counting,—

"*Thirteen!—Fourteen!—Fifteen!—*"

"Fifteen o'clock!" cried Lumpins, transferring his hold from the lamp-post to the shoulders of his companion. "I say, Boozle,—I ken remember, (*hic*)—man an' boy, for (*hic*) nigh onto forty year, but (*hic*) bless me if I ever before (*hic*) *knew it to be so late as this!*" C.

SCIENCE.

In a communication to the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, on the Extirpation of Venomous Serpents from Islands, Mr. Robert Brown calls attention to the fact that the common domestic pig has exterminated rattlesnakes in some districts of Oregon, and that great antipathy exists between the pig and poisonous snakes in all parts of the world. This animal seems to enjoy, in a singular degree, immunity from the venom of reptiles; and the author is disposed to regard the non-occurrence of snakes in Ireland as attributable to the large number of pigs kept in that country.

The government of India has added the weight of its sanction to Professor Halford's method of treatment for snake bite—which consists in the injection of ammonia into the veins—by officially thanking him for his paper on the subject. The Governor-General has determined to print his pamphlet for general distribution among the medical officers stationed throughout the country. This action would indicate that the hostile criticism at first directed against Professor Halford's system has proved unfounded.

A prize for the invention of a method to protect mill-stone cutters from the dust arising from their work, which produces serious affections of the lungs, was recently offered by a French industrial society. It has been awarded to the contriver of an exceedingly simple but effective arrangement, which consists merely of a large fire and a tall chimney, whereby a current is created which sweeps through the establishment at a speed of ten feet per second, thus removing every particle of the injurious dust in its passage.

The annual test of the coin of the United States at the mint in Philadelphia, is called the trial of the pyx, from the name of the box used as a place of deposit for the sample coins. A commission is appointed every year to superintend the assay, and among the members this year are President Barnard of Columbia College, and Dr. John Torrey, the distinguished Professor of Botany in the same institution, who is also at the head of the United States Assay Office in New York.

An investigation made by two eminent French physicists into the sanitary effects produced by the use of iron stoves, shows that both wrought iron and cast-iron, when heated to a certain degree, become pervious to the passage of gas, and that a hot cast-iron stove absorbs oxygen and gives out carbonic acid gas. This discovery shows how prejudicial to health is the use of such stoves. Wrought iron was found to be less porous than cast-iron.

A resident of Colombo, in the island of Ceylon, writes to *Nature* describing a curious meteorological phenomenon which occurs there, and which the inhabitants call "Buddhu's Rays." It consists of radiated bands in the sky, alternately of rose color and blue, proceeding from a point close to the horizon, and is generally noticed in the west at sunset, although it occasionally appears in the east. It commonly extends from thirty to forty degrees.

The blue duck of New Zealand differs from other ducks in exhibiting no solicitude for its young. Capt. Hutton, a member of the Wellington Philosophical Society, argues that this fact is a confirmation of the Darwinian theory, inasmuch as the blue duck belongs to a genus peculiar to New Zealand before there were any destructive animals in the country, and in which, therefore, instinctive fear has never been developed.

The Swiss government proposes to construct a tunnel under the pass of St. Gothard, which will connect Italy with Switzerland and Germany. Its length will be double that of the Mount Cenis tunnel, and the work will be much more difficult, as the projected route passes beneath several lakes and rivers, as well as under peaks varying in height from eight thousand to ten thousand feet.

At latest accounts, subscriptions to the amount of about six thousand dollars had been received by the Royal Geographical Society, toward the expenses of an expedition for the relief of Dr. Livingstone. More than two years and a half have now elapsed since letters have been received from the great African traveller, and the last of these represented him as extremely destitute.

An account of a remarkable hail-storm, which occurred at Zurich in August last, comes to us from that city. The hail-stones possessed a salty taste, and on analysis were found to contain salt, probably taken up by the wind from the northern plains of Africa.

Some bituminous mortar recently brought from the ruins of Babylon has been found to consist largely of pulverized gray limestone, which would indicate that the Babylonians did not know how to burn lime and slake it for mortar, after the modern fashion.

Dr. Hayes, the Arctic explorer, announces his belief, which agrees with that of other recent travellers, that the interior of Greenland is covered with ice, and he thinks it would be impossible to cross the country from side to side.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

AN ANXIOUS READER says: "I wait anxiously each week for the arrival of the *Ledger*, and I shall be more anxious than ever until your instructions as to what I had better do are received. My case is this: At a party, consisting of a number of lady and gentlemen friends, one evening in the first week of January of the present year, the party were joking about 'leap-year,' and what a splendid opportunity it afforded the ladies. One of them, in a joking manner, as I at the time supposed, asked if we should not consider ourselves engaged. I, in a joking way, replied, 'Yes; nothing would suit me better.' The lady now claims that we are positively engaged, and that she will hold me to the engagement. What I want to know is this: Is an engagement made in fun binding, and will the courts of Illinois sustain her? I don't wish any of my friends here to know of this, as they would laugh at me, and I can't very well face father and tell him of it. I am too young to think for a moment of such an entanglement, entirely too young to marry. Now, Mr. Editor, if you will advise me how to get out of this fix, I promise never to say 'Yes' to anything a lady says to me again, until I am of age." We can hardly help thinking that the young lady is trying a practical joke upon you; but if you should ever be brought into a court of law, she would be bound to show, from former relations, from subsequent actions, that the engagement was *bona fide*, and you only can judge how far she can make out a case of this kind. Your acknowledgment, for example, of such an engagement in presence of friends would be a strong point in her favor; and the entire absence of any acts indicative of engagement would be an equally strong point against her. It will possibly be best to return to the protection of your home, and pursue a course of "masterly inactivity." It may turn out that in appreciating your worth, she shows her own fine qualities, and may be ultimately the best wife you could find, or rather that would find you. Is not "snap" a cardinal virtue in Illinois?

EVANGELINE says: "I am a young married lady; have been married four years, and for the past three years have been living very unhappily with my husband. I found out soon after our marriage that he had a very exacting, jealous disposition, jealous in the extreme. Never having been a flirt, I thought I should not arouse it; but the mere civilities that common politeness and society demanded of me, brought trouble in our household. I was watched, and he twitted me time and again with things of which I am not guilty. We have no children. I have tried to make him a good and faithful wife. My disposition is naturally sunny, but I feel that it is getting warped daily. I loved him when I married him, but he has entirely chilled that love by his own conduct. He provides well, and his tongue is his worst weapon. I have often thought I could forgive all, if he would only change, but it is his nature. He cannot change it, or does not try. Nothing but a bitter trial, or some great sorrow, will ever bring out his better and nobler self; at least that is my idea. Now, Mr. Editor, will you please be kind enough to give me your opinion through the columns of your paper? Do you not think we had better separate than to live together in such perpetual sin? We are both young, and have a long life before us, and I would rather be laid at rest in my grave than to think that the horizon of my whole life is to be draped with dark and threatening clouds." No. You had better live together, you becoming better and nobler by bearing this cross, eventually conquering this wickedness, and having—let us hope—a brighter life yet before you. It is love perverted that makes this jealousy. Bear much, rather than rush from "ills you have to others that you know not of," in a separation.

TUBAL (East Douglas, Mass.) writes: "Some time ago I read an account in the Boston *Herald* of a spiritual manifestation that took place in front of Rev. H. W. Beecher's pulpit, while he was preaching. The article stated that tables moved back and forth to such an extent that reporters were obliged to move from their seats, in order to let the tables have a chance to do as they seemed inclined. Now I have had a dispute about the truth of the *Herald's* statement, and hope you will set the facts before us in Notices to Correspondents in the *Ledger*. At first I thought I would write Mr. Beecher, and ask him to give us his ideas of Spiritualism in a *Ledger* article; but I decided I would never hear from him, so I had concluded to let that go, and to get the history of the reported table-tipping in Plymouth Church through you and the *Ledger*, which I have read for many years, and hope to do for many more. I shall eagerly watch the *Ledger* for an answer to this, and I can assure you your answer will be interesting to a great many persons in this vicinity." We have not heard of the manifestation in question, but do not doubt it for a moment. Its appearance in a newspaper in Boston is itself conclusive. Nor can anything be more likely. It is hard for anybody or anything to be *unmoved* while Mr. Beecher is preaching, and indeed he has been turning the tables in one way or other all his life, as his rash opponents have found. He did it once in Liverpool. There can be no harm in writing Mr. Beecher. He receives a good many letters; and *we* find him a most punctual correspondent, never letting a week pass without a communication.

BLANCHE W. says: "My mamma has taken your paper ever since I can remember, and has often given me good advice from your answers to correspondents. Now I come to you in trouble; something that to you may be nothing; to me life itself. My father died two years ago, and now we have become quite reduced. I have had two offers of marriage; one from a gentleman who has wealth, but no principle. He is dissipated I know, for he has visited me several times under the influence of liquor. I cannot love him; still my mother wishes me to marry him. The other I love, but at the present time he is poor. He says if I will wait three years, that he will be well enough off, so that my mother will not be ashamed of him. I am willing to wait, for I am only eighteen. I can give lessons on either the piano or harp. Which would be the most profitable? I never had anything but a showy education; so it is impossible for me to teach school. Please do not think this of little consequence." No wise and good mother should urge such a marriage, for the two reasons—that the love that hallows marriage is lacking on one side, and that no woman can reasonably hope for happiness with a drunkard. There is no reason against your waiting, and, if possible, teaching music, as you find one instrument or the other most profitable. Pupils for the harp are not often found. Educate yourself in things solid; and show your mother that fine old sentiment, beginning, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than," etc.

AUGUSTA (Humboldt, Iowa) says: "I want your advice. I have a beau who is very attentive to me, and I doubt not loves me. He is ambitious and proud-spirited, but not strictly moral or temperate. Makes himself prominent in the ball-room, and, like myself, likes music and lively company. I also have another lover whom I once refused, but neither my refusal nor my keeping company with another appears to make any difference in his attachment to me, although he never visits me. This gentleman is very quiet and unassuming; has no bad habits, and is much respected by people generally. He seldom goes into gay company, but appears to enjoy himself most at home. Now what shall I do? And if I should turn off the former one, how shall I manage—even if it is Leap-year—to let the other know he is to be the favored one?" As the prospects are that you can only spend a limited portion of your future life in the ball-room, the quiet and domestic man is likely to be the more agreeable husband. As to how to let him know that he may renew his suit—that is a point on which the *Ledger* does not presume to instruct any woman.

CARROLL (Carrollton, Mo.) says: "Being a constant reader of your valuable paper, I would like some information on the following: George the Third, or Fourth, of England, married a Cecil; I wish to know something of them. Was Lord Baltimore, or Charles Carroll, a descendant of the Cecils? I have had some argument about the family and their descendants. Any information you give me on the subject through the *Ledger* will be thankfully received." We hope our information will not cut the root of your genealogical tree, for we are obliged by inexorable history to declare that George the Third married Charlotte Sophia, daughter of the Duke of Mecklenburgh-Strelitz; and George the Fourth, his cousin, the daughter of the Duke of Brunswick. We understood Calvert to be the family name of Lord Baltimore. If your opponent was well up in history, you must have required a good deal of strong asserting to maintain your argument. You must give us more precise data regarding those you seek.

J. S. M. (Brooklyn) writes: "Will you please inform a party who are thinking about travelling in search of a home, whether it would be better to go South or West. What is your opinion of the State of Florida? Also, of Lower California? And what is your opinion of the Western and Southern States in general? Which State would you advise us to go to?" Florida has a delightful climate, and has been resorted to by some invalids with advantage. Lower California is hardly in a sufficiently settled condition to be a desirable home for a family at present. The tide of emigration sets more strongly West than South, as yet. As for selecting a particular State, you can do that better for yourself, after informing yourself more fully about the relative advantages of different sections. One thing we advise you to do: Avoid a fever and ague country.

S. C. MILLER (New York) says: "Mr. Editor, will you be kind enough, through the columns of your valuable paper, to answer the following questions: What is the perfect participle of the word eat? Webster says it is eat or eaten. If *eat* be used in this sense, is it not pronounced as if it were spelled *et?* By publishing the answer in your next issue, you will much oblige me." Yes, when *eat* is used as a perfect participle it is pronounced *et*. It is also pronounced *et* when it is used in the imperfect tense.

M. S. (Knoxville, Knox county, Ill.) says: "Will you please inform me who Lucretia Borgia was, and what were the circumstances of her crimes? In reading the trial of Mrs. Wharton, I find her spoken of as the modern Borgia. Please inform me as soon as possible, and oblige a well-wisher." Lucretia Borgia was the daughter of Rodrigo Borgia, who was Pope (Alexander VI.) in 1492. She was beautiful, accomplished, licentious and audacious in crime, in a very remarkable degree.

KNOXVILLE (Tenn.) says: "You will do a reader of the *Ledger* a favor by answering the following question: In recording marriages in a family record, is it proper to give the lady's maiden name or the name she assumes after marriage?" The maiden name of the lady is to be inserted, as properly describing the lady who was married—for the first time.

J. W. V. (Pittsburgh) asks: "Which was the highest rank General Grant held in the army before he was elected President of the United States?" The highest rank which General Grant, or any one else, ever held in our army was that of *General*. It was created expressly for him. The highest rank before that was *Lieutenant General*.

J. W. J. (Sturgeon, Mo.) says: "In your answers to correspondents, please tell us the origin of the barber's pole, and why it is striped as it is." Barbers used to let blood, and the stripe round the pole represented a ribbon rolled round the arm, as a preparation for the process.

A READER (Bonham, Texas) writes: "I am much perplexed. I am fearful to risk my judgment upon a question so grave and important that upon it may depend my future happiness; and having seen so much of your judicious advice in the columns devoted to correspondents, I have determined to come to you with my perplexity. About two years ago, while visiting a distant city, I met and became acquainted with a young lady whom I had never seen before. Why it was, I cannot tell; for it had indeed seemed that connubial affection would never enter my breast; yet something about her won me. I at once found myself in love. She had means of finding out my character, how much I was worth, etc. She consented to correspond with me, and indeed my affections seemed reciprocated. I kept her posted with my business affairs, and in my misfortunes she manifested herself as being more true. Though I did not ask her to be mine, it seemed to be understood that we loved. I visited the city again. I found I loved her even more. She, however, told me, during my stay, that she had great respect for me, and thought herself much honored in having my love; yet that she did not love me. Being determined never to marry in the absence of mutual affection, I told her, if this be true, I did not ask her to be mine. I asked her for my letters. She said she wished to keep them, and also said that she would continue to correspond with me, if I desired. I have written to her, asking her if she yet loves me; if not, to send me my letters, and I would return hers. She neither replied nor sent the letters. I wrote again, demanding an answer or my letters. Though done mildly and with much respect to her, yet I cannot hear from her, nor does she send the letters. What does she mean? I love her devotedly, and feel as though I may never love another. What should I do? Should I write again, or what is your suggestion?" Go and see the young lady, and have an explanation with her. She probably loves you more than she is aware of. You speak of "misfortunes." If you have had trouble in your business, may be there's the rub.

PABULUM (Washington, D. C.) says: "Being a reader of the *Ledger*, I am aware that its correspondence department is made the means of conveying much useful and valuable information and advice to those seeking it, and in imitation of their example, I have concluded to avail myself of the opportunity afforded for obtaining light upon a subject which has been the source of some perplexing doubts. The questions which I wish to propound are as follows: 1. Can you, Mr. Editor, from personal observation and experience, or otherwise, inform me whether, as a general thing, home-made bread—such as rolls, biscuits, etc.—*when eaten cold*, is as nutritious and digestible as bakers' bread, or bread purchased in stores, especially for a person whose constitution is rather weak? 2. Do you consider pastry of any kind as a necessary item of food, or as beneficial in any degree to the mental stamina of a person who is compelled to bring into exercise his reasoning powers? Do you not rather regard it, in some instances, as the indirect cause of mental imbecility, and productive of physical disorganization? The above may or may not be a proper subject for newspaper inquiry. If, however, it should be deemed worthy of the *Ledger's* notice, a reply thereto will be very gratefully received." Good bakers' bread is lighter, and probably more nutritious than home-made bread of the same kind; also than rolls, biscuit, etc., even when cold. At the same time we are bound to connect with this *opinion* the fact that we never miss a chance to take the cold home-made—in *practice*. We think it very bad for persons to eat a full and sufficient meal, and *then* to add a supply of pastry. In our observation, the greatest lovers of pastry never trouble themselves about their "mental stamina." They are philosophers under twelve. We do think pastry and other things sent down after a full meal favorable to physical disorganization, but we should pre-suppose the "mental imbecility" on the part of those who indulge in this fashion. Dyspepsia avenges the folly.

J. W. C. (Cleveland) says: "I am a young Englishman; have been in this country twelve months. Since I have been here, a relative of mine has died, and willed to me £500, or $2,500. I am a deserter from the English army, and my solicitor, or I should say the solicitor who is named in the will, informs me that I cannot receive the money unless I return to England, and give myself up to the authorities. Now, sir, I want to know if he is right, or whether he is trying to cheat me out of my rights? Secondly, can the military authorities of England, if they find out my address, order my arrest and return to England, as I am not yet a citizen of the United States? I have a young wife, and would rather sacrifice the money than return to England and surrender, leaving her here alone with strangers. By answering my questions you will greatly oblige me." As we do not know what the provisions of the will are, under which your legacy comes, we cannot decide whether your solicitor is right or not in his statement. You should write to some friend in England, and authorize him to examine the will, and report to you. He should also ascertain if there is anything in the English laws of inheritance which bear specially upon your case. The English government cannot order your arrest while you are under the American flag, whether you are naturalized or not.

F. G. (Wilmington, Ohio) says: "To be brief, you will oblige us with your views upon the subject of compulsory education, and where we would be most likely to obtain the statistics in regard to it; its effects in Germany and other places where it has been tried. What does Mr. Beecher think about it? Being no hand at compliments, we will dispense with them, but we have been a subscriber to your paper for more than ten years, and this is the first time we ever addressed you. We shall consider ourselves highly complimented by an answer, and shall be pleased if you agree with us in the opinion that it is not necessary in this country." Any good work on Prussia will give you the information you desire. Mr. Beecher has not, so far as we know, written on this subject; but when the question becomes practical here, you will no doubt hear from him. If men's votes are to settle the fate of the country, why should not precautions be taken against the next generation being ignorant? But we do not argue on that which is not yet a "live" question. Only consider: has a parent a right to bring up his child in ignorance? May he not be as justly required to see to his being educated, as fed?

BLACKSMITH (Hoboken) says: "Like thousands of other men who labor for a living, I read the *Ledger* to fill my mind with useful knowledge, that I have no means of acquiring in any other way. As I find so many questions answered in its columns, that not only benefit the inquirer, but nearly all its readers, I take the liberty to ask a question myself. It is one which has been discussed so much in my place of business, that it has led to some hard feelings among the men; but I have got their consent to leave the matter for you to decide. The question is, What is borax? One party contends that it is made wholly of chemicals—that it is a manufactured article; another, that it is a mineral substance, and a natural production. If you will be kind enough to define it to us through the *Ledger*, you will confer a great favor upon us blacksmiths." Borax is a mineral, and also a natural production. In chemistry, it is technically called biborate of soda, and is a salt formed by a combination of boracic acid with soda. It was originally obtained from a lake in Thibet, and was sent to Europe under the name of *tincal*.

LUCIUS (Townsend, Del.) says: "I have been a constant reader of your valuable paper for many years. Your answers to correspondents have greatly interested me, and I have gained some useful information from the columns of the *Ledger* devoted to that purpose. What books is it necessary to read in order to become acquainted with the profession of law? Where can they be obtained? And the probable cost of the same? How long does it take one to read homeopathy, providing one applies himself assiduously to the work? And what books are required for the purpose? And which is the best way of going about it?" Apply to any respectable lawyer, who will name for you the books he used, probably the works of Blackstone, Kent, Story and Maine, and then apply to a bookseller for the cost. Homeopathy is learned as allopathy is, by a regular scientific training in a medical school. There are quacks in it, of course, as in the other system; but you are not to be a quack. Go to work in the regular way, and be thorough. You can find easily a Homeopathic college.

S. H. P. (Ithaca) asks: "What is the best work with which to commence the study of law? I have an idea that after reading law two years, one may enter an office with one doing a large and varied business, and receive a good salary. Am I correct? And what opportunities does the city offer in that direction for a young man of limited means?" Kent's Commentaries is the first work usually read by a law student in this country. Whether one, after reading law two years, can get a good salary or not, in a lawyer's office, will depend on his ability and aptitude for doing the needed work in such an office. New York always has a place and good pay for young men who can take right hold of the downright work which lies at the foundation of the business or professional prosperity of the city, and do it in a prompt and satisfactory manner. But there is not much chance here for young men who want to get along without settling down to real hard work.

J. N. H. (Galesburg, Ill.) says: "Will you very much oblige by answering the following in your correspondents' department of the *Ledger*. 1st. To what city in Italy does the Italian proverb, 'See (name of city) and die,' apply? 2d. Is there a preponderance of the birth rate of either sex in the population of the globe; and if so, which? 3d. Which sex is in excess on arriving at adult age?" 1st. The Italian proverb is, "Vedi Napoli e poi mori," that is, "See Naples and die." 2. We have no statistics of the globe of a reliable kind, many tribes being a little behind in this department; but where inquiries have been made, there has been a preponderance of boys over girls, ranging from 109 to 104 boys to every hundred girls. 3. It is generally believed that at maturity the excess is in favor of females.

C. D. writes: "I would like to ask one question, which you may think a little foolish; but it is this: In Mrs. Southworth's story, 'Between Two Fires,' chap. 64, she says, in the third and fourth paragraphs: 'But now the first of these, the Rev. Mr. Goodwin, was a saint in heaven. The second, Mrs. Wesley, was a missionary in *Farther* India.' Now does she mean to say that *India is farther off than heaven?*" In the days of which the author writes, that great peninsula in the southern part of Asia, lying far east of Hindostan, between the Bay of Bengal and the China Sea, and comprising Birmah, Siam and Annan, was, as every school-boy is aware, known under the general name of Farther India, and was a great field of missionary labor. Your point is "*far* fetched."

READER (Marion, Ind.) says: "Under the caption of Science, in the *Ledger* of 6th instant, there is a notice of a peculiar hot wind in Switzerland, 'Fou Wind,' which, according to the correspondent, is the terror of the country, and upon its approach all the fires are extinguished. In all the scientific works I ever read, all the journals or letters of travellers through this much-talked-of land, I never before heard mention of the 'Fou Wind.' If it would not be asking too much of you, I would like to know where I can learn more of this peculiar wind." We refer you for an account of the Föhn—so spelled usually—to "The Scientific Guide to Switzerland," by J. R. Morell, published by Smith, Elder & Co., London.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*